This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

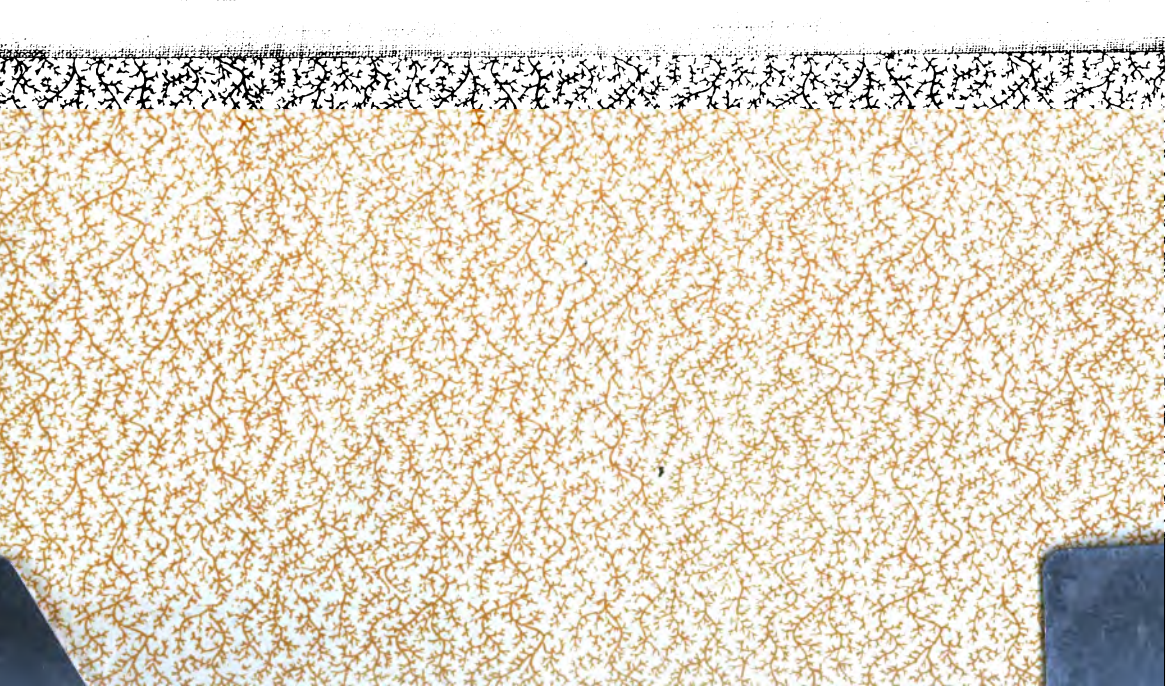
+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

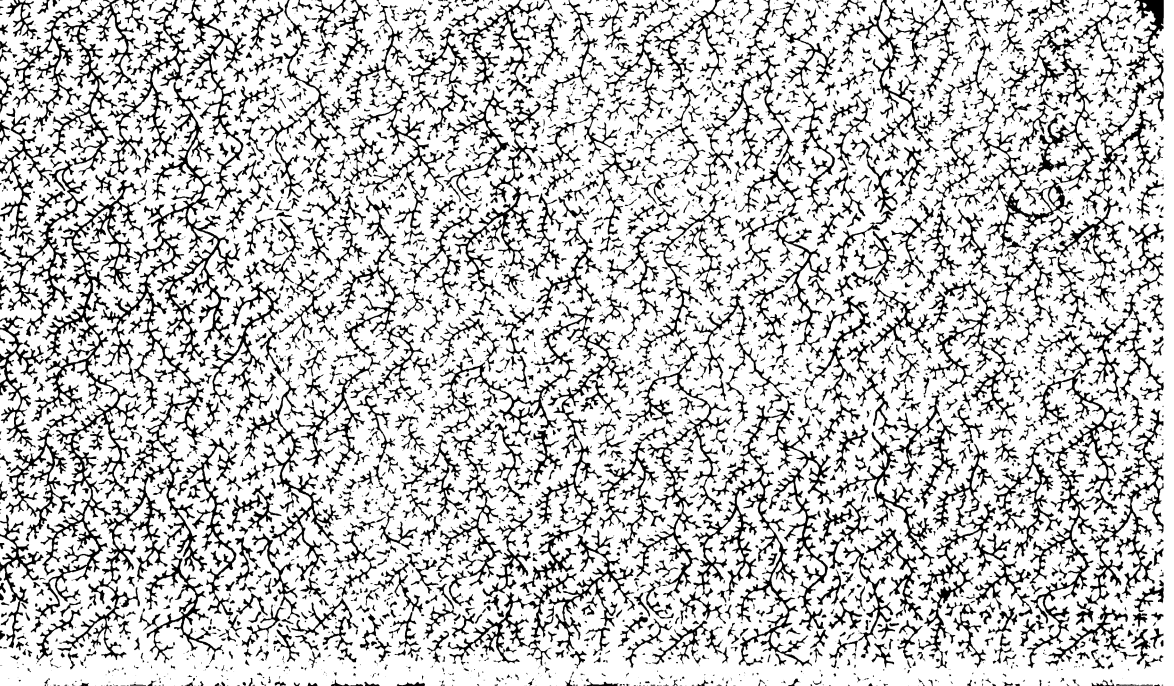
+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

NYPL RESEARCH LIBRARIES
3 3433 07578511 7





THE

WORKS

OF

THE REV. GEORGE CRABBE.

IN EIGHT VOLUMES.

VOL. VII.

NEW YORK
PUBLIC
LIBRARY

LONDON:
JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE-STREET.
1823.

NEW YORK
PUBLIC
LIBRARY

CONTENTS OF VOL. VII.

BOOK IX.

THE PRECEPTOR HUSBAND.

The Morning Ride—Conversation—Character of one whom they meet—His early Habits and Mode of Thinking—The Wife whom he would choose—The one chosen—His Attempts to teach—In History—In Botany—The Lady's Proficiency—His Complaint—Her Defence and Triumph—The Trial ends . . . . . Page 1

BOOK X.

THE OLD BACHELOR.

A Friend arrives at the Hall—Old Bachelors and Maids—Relation of one—His Parents—The first Courtship—The second—The third—Long Interval—Travel—Decline of Life—The fourth Lady—Conclusion 21

BOOK XI.

THE MAID'S STORY.

A Mother's Advice—Trials for a young Lady—Ancient Lovers—The Mother a Wife—Grandmamma—Genteel Economy—Frederick, a young Collegian—Grandmamma dies—Retreat

with Biddy—Comforts of the Poor—Return Home—Death of the Husband—Nervous Disorders—Conversion—Frederick a Teacher—Retreat to Sidmouth—Self-examination—The Mother dies—Frederick a Soldier—Retirement with a Friend—Their Happiness how interrupted—Frederick an Actor—Is dismissed and supported—A last Adventure
Page 59

BOOK XII.

SIR OWEN DALE.

The Rector at the Hall—Why absent—He relates the Story of Sir Owen—His Marriage—Death of his Lady—His Mind acquires new Energy—His Passions awake—His Taste and Sensibility—Admires a Lady—Camilla—Her Purpose—Sir Owen's Disappointment—His Spirit of Revenge—How gratified—The Dilemma of Love—An Example of Forgiveness—Its Effect 111

BOOK XIII.

DELAY HAS DANGER.

Morning Excursion—Lady at Gilford, who?—Reflections on Delay—Cecilia and Henry—The Lovers contracted—Visit to the Patron—Whom he finds there—Fanny described—The Yielding of Vanity—Delay—Resentment—Want of Resolution—Further Entanglement—Danger—How met—Conclusion 157

BOOK XIV.

THE NATURAL DEATH OF LOVE.

The Rector of the Parish—His Manner of teaching—Of living—Richard's Correspondence—The Letters received—Love

that survives Marriage—That dies in Consequence—That is permitted to die for Want of Care—Henry and Emma, a Dialogue—Complaints on either Side—And Replies—Mutual Accusation—Defence of acknowledged Error—Means of restoring Happiness—The one to be adopted Page 197

TALES OF THE HALL.

BOOK IX.

The Morning Ride—Conversation—Character of one whom they meet—His early Habits and Mode of Thinking—The Wife whom he would choose—The one chosen—His Attempts to teach —In History—In Botany—The Lady's Proficiency—His Complaint—Her Defence and Triumph—The Trial ends.

TALES OF THE HALL.

BOOK IX.

THE PRECEPTOR HUSBAND.

" WHOM pass'd we musing near the woodman's shed,
" Whose horse not only carried him but led,
" That his grave rider might have slept the time,
" Or solved a problem, or composed a rhyme?
" A more abstracted man within my view
" Has never come—He recollected you."

" Yes,—he was thoughtful—thinks the whole day long,
" Deeply, and chiefly that he once thought wrong;
" He thought a strong and kindred mind to trace
" In the soft outlines of a trifler's face.

" Poor Finch! I knew him when at school,—a boy
" Who might be said his labours to enjoy;

" So young a pedant that he always took
" The girl to dance who most admired her book;
" And would the butler and the cook surprise,
" Who listen'd to his Latin exercise;
" The matron's self the praise of Finch avow'd,
" He was so serious, and he read so loud:
" But yet, with all this folly and conceit,
" The lines he wrote were elegant and neat;
" And early promise in his mind appear'd
" Of noble efforts when by reason clear'd.

" And when he spoke of wives, the boy would say,
" His should be skill'd in Greek and algebra;
" For who would talk with one to whom his themes,
" And favourite studies, were no more than dreams?
" For this, though courteous, gentle, and humane,
" The boys contemn'd and hated him as vain,
" Stiff and pedantic.—"

" Did the man enjoy,
" In after life, the visions of the boy?"

" At least they form'd his wishes, they were yet
" The favourite views on which his mind was set:
" He quaintly said, how happy must they prove,
" Who, loving, study—or who, studious, love;

" Who feel their minds with sciences imbued,
" And their warm hearts by beauty's force subdued.

" His widow'd mother, who the world had seen,
" And better judge of either sex had been,
" Told him that just as their affairs were placed,
" In some respects, he must forego his taste;
" That every beauty, both of form and mind,
" Must be by him, if unendow'd, resign'd;
" That wealth was wanted for their joint affairs;
" His sisters' portions, and the Hall's repairs.

" The son assented—and the wife must bring
" Wealth, learning, beauty, ere he gave the ring;
" But as these merits, when they all unite,
" Are not produced in every soil and site;
" And when produced are not the certain gain
" Of him who would these precious things obtain;
" Our patient student waited many a year,
" Nor saw this phœnix in his walks appear.
" But as views mended in the joint estate,
" He would a something in his points abate;
" Give him but learning, beauty, temper, sense,
" And he would then the happy state commence.
" The mother sigh'd, but she at last agreed,
" And now the son was likely to succeed;

" Wealth is substantial good the fates allot,
" We know we have it, or we have it not;
" But all those graces, which men highly rate,
" Their minds themselves imagine and create;
" And therefore Finch was in a way to find
" A good that much depended on his mind.

" He look'd around, observing, till he saw
" Augusta Dallas! when he felt an awe
" Of so much beauty and commanding grace,
" That well became the honours of her race:

" This lady never boasted of the trash
" That commerce brings: she never spoke of cash;
" The gentle blood that ran in every vein
" At all such notions blush'd in pure disdain.—

" Wealth once relinquish'd, there was all beside,
" As Finch believed, that could adorn a bride;
" He could not gaze upon the form and air,
" Without concluding all was right and fair;
" Her mild but dignified reserve suppress
" All free inquiry—but his mind could rest,
" Assured that all was well, and in that view was blest.

" And now he ask'd, 'am I the happy man
" 'Who can deserve her? is there one who can?'
" His mother told him, he possess'd the land
" That puts a man in heart to ask a hand;
" All who possess it feel they bear about
" A spell that puts a speedy end to doubt;
" But Finch was modest—'May it then be thought
" 'That she can so be gain'd?'—'She may be sought:'
" 'Can love with land be won?' 'By land is beauty bought.
" 'Do not, dear Charles, with indignation glow,
" 'All value that the want of which they know;
" 'Nor do I blame her; none that worth denies:
" 'But can my son be sure of what he buys?
" 'Beauty she has, but with it can you find
" 'The inquiring spirit, or the studious mind?
" 'This wilt thou need who art to thinking prone,
" 'And minds unpair'd had better think alone;
" 'Then how unhappy will the husband be,
" 'Whose sole associate spoils his company?'

" This he would try; but all such trials prove
" Too mighty for a man disposed to love;
" He whom the magic of a face enchains
" But little knowledge of the mind obtains;

" If by his tender heart the man is led,
" He finds how erring is the soundest head.

" The lady saw his purpose; she could meet
" The man's inquiry, and his aim defeat;
" She had a studied flattery in her look,
" She could be seen retiring with a book;
" She by attending to his speech could prove,
" That she for learning had a fervent love;
" Yet love alone, she modestly declared,
" She must be spared inquiry, and was spared;
" Of her poor studies she was not so weak,
" As in his presence, or at all, to speak;
" But to discourse with him—who, all agreed,
" Has read so much, would be absurd indeed;
" Ask what he might, she was so much a dunce
" She would confess her ignorance at once.

" All this the man believed not,—doom'd to grieve
" For his belief, he this would not believe:
" No! he was quite in raptures to discern
" That love, and that avidity to learn.
" 'Could she have found,' she said, 'a friend, a guide,
" 'Like him, to study had been all her pride;
" 'But, doom'd so long to frivolous employ,
" 'How could she those superior views enjoy?

" 'The day might come—a happy day for her,
" 'When she might choose the ways she should prefer.'

" Then too he learn'd, in accidental way,
" How much she grieved to lose the given day
" In dissipation wild, in visitation gay.
" Happy, most happy, must the woman prove
" Who proudly looks on him she vows to love;
" Who can her humble acquisitions state,
" That he will praise, at least will tolerate.

" Still the cool mother sundry doubts express'd,—
" 'How! is Augusta graver than the rest?
" 'There are three others: they are not inclined
" 'To feed with precious food the empty mind:
" 'Whence this strong relish?' 'It is very strong,'
" Replied the son, 'and has possess'd her long,
" 'Increased indeed, I may presume, by views,—
" 'We may suppose—ah! may she not refuse?'

" 'Fear not!—I see the question must be tried,
" 'Nay, is determined—let us to your Bride.'

" They soon were wedded, and the Nymph appear'd
" By all her promised excellence endear'd:
" Her words were kind, were cautious, and were few,
" And she was proud—of what her husband knew.

" Weeks pass'd away, some five or six, before,
" Bless'd in the present, Finch could think of more:
" A month was next upon a journey spent,
" When to the Lakes the fond companions went;
" Then the gay town received them, and, at last,
" Home to their mansion, man and wife, they pass'd.

" And now in quiet way they came to live
" On what their fortune, love, and hopes would give:
" The honied moon had nought but silver rays,
" And shone benignly on their early days;
" The second moon a light less vivid shed,
" And now the silver rays were tinged with lead.
" They now began to look beyond the Hall,
" And think what friends would make a morning-call;
" Their former appetites return'd, and now
" Both could their wishes and their tastes avow;
" 'Twas now no longer 'just what you approve,'
" But 'let the wild fowl be to-day, my love.'
" In fact the senses, drawn aside by force
" Of a strong passion, sought their usual course.

" Now to her music would the wife repair,
" To which he listen'd once with eager air;
" When there was so much harmony within,
" That any note was sure its way to win;

" But now the sweet melodious tones were sent
" From the struck chords, and none cared where they
went.
" Full well we know that many a favourite air,
" That charms a party, fails to charm a pair;
" And as Augusta play'd she look'd around,
" To see if one was dying at the sound:
" But all were gone—a husband, wrapt in gloom,
" Stalk'd careless, listless, up and down the room.

" And now 'tis time to fill that ductile mind
" With knowledge, from his stores of various kind:
" His mother, in a peevish mood, had ask'd,
" 'Does your Augusta profit? is she task'd?'

" 'Madam!' he cried, offended with her looks,
" 'There's time for all things, and not all for books:
" 'Just on one's marriage to sit down, and prate
" 'On points of learning, is a thing I hate.—'

" 'Tis right, my son, and it appears to me
" 'If deep your hatred, you must well agree.'

" Finch was too angry for a man so wise,
" And said, 'Insinuation I despise!

" 'Nor do I wish to have a mind so full
" 'Of learned trash—it makes a woman dull:
" 'Let it suffice, that I in her discern
" 'An aptitude, and a desire to learn.—'

" The matron smiled, but she observed a frown
" On her son's brow, and calmly sat her down;
" Leaving the truth to Time, who solves our doubt,
" By bringing his all-glorious daughter out—
" Truth! for whose beauty all their love profess,
" And yet how many think it ugliness!

" 'Augusta, love,' said Finch, 'while you engage
" 'In that embroidery, let me read a page;
" 'Suppose it Hume's; indeed he takes a side,
" 'But still an author need not be our guide;
" 'And as he writes with elegance and ease,
" 'Do now attend—he will be sure to please.
" 'Here at the Revolution we commence,—
" 'We date, you know, our liberties from hence.'

" 'Yes, sure,' Augusta answer'd with a smile,
" 'Our teacher always talk'd about his style;
" 'When we about the Revolution read,
" 'And how the Martyrs to the flames were led;

" 'The good old Bishops, I forget their names,
" 'But they were all committed to the flames;
" 'Maidens and widows, bachelors and wives,—
" 'The very babes and sucklings lost their lives.
" 'I read it all in Guthrie at the school,—
" 'What now!—I know you took me for a fool;
" 'There were five Bishops taken from the stall,
" 'And twenty widows, I remember all;
" 'And by this token, that our teacher tried
" 'To cry for pity, till she howl'd and cried.'

" 'True, true, my love, but you mistake the thing,—
" 'The Revolution that made William king
" 'Is what I mean; the Reformation you,
" 'In Edward and Elizabeth.'—' 'Tis true:
" 'But the nice reading is the love between
" 'The brave lord Essex and the cruel queen;
" 'And how he sent the ring to save his head,
" 'Which the false lady kept till he was dead.

" 'That is all true: now read, and I'll attend:
" 'But was not she a most deceitful friend?
" 'It was a monstrous, vile, and treacherous thing,
" 'To show no pity, and to keep the ring;
" 'But the queen shook her in her dying bed,
" 'And 'God forgive you!' was the word she said;

" ' Not I for certain:'——Come, I will attend,
" ' So read the Revolutions to an end.'

" Finch, with a timid, strange, inquiring look,
" Softly and slowly laid aside the book
" With sigh inaudible——' Come, never heed,'
" Said he, recovering, ' now I cannot read.'

" They walk'd at leisure through their wood and groves,
" In fields and lanes, and talk'd of plants and loves,
" And loves of plants.—Said Finch, ' Augusta, dear,
" ' You said you loved to learn,—were you sincere?
" ' Do you remember that you told me once
" ' How much you grieved, and said you were a dunce?
" ' That is, you wanted information. Say,
" ' What would you learn? I will direct your way.'

" ' Goodness!' said she, ' what meanings you discern
" ' In a few words! I said I wish'd to learn,
" ' And so I think I did; and you replied,
" ' The wish was good: what would you now beside?
" ' Did not you say it show'd an ardent mind;
" ' And pray what more do you expect to find?'

" ' My dear Augusta, could you wish indeed
" ' For any knowledge, and not then proceed?

" 'That is not wishing——'
" 'Mercy! how you tease!
" 'You knew I said it with a view to please;
" 'A compliment to you, and quite enough,—
" 'You would not kill me with that puzzling stuff!
" 'Sure I might say I wish'd; but that is still
" 'Far from a promise: it is not,—'I will.'

" 'But come, to show you that I will not hide
" 'My proper talents, you shall be my guide;
" 'And lady Boothby, when we meet, shall cry,
" 'She's quite as good a botanist as I.'

" 'Right, my Augusta;' and, in manner grave,
" Finch his first lecture on the science gave;
" An introduction,—and he said, 'My dear,
" 'Your thought was happy,—let us persevere;
" 'And let no trifling cause our work retard,—'
" Agreed the lady, but she fear'd it hard.

" Now o'er the grounds they rambled many a mile;
" He show'd the flowers, the stamina, the style,
" Calix and corol, pericarp and fruit,
" And all the plant produces, branch and root;
" Of these he treated, every varying shape,
" Till poor Augusta panted to escape:

" He show'd the various foliage plants produce,
" Lunate and lyrate, runcinate, retuse;
" Long were the learned words, and urged with force,
" Panduriform, pinnatifid, premorse,
" Latent, and patent, papulous, and plane,—
" 'Oh!' said the pupil, 'it will turn my brain.'
" 'Fear not,' he answer'd, and again, intent
" To fill that mind, o'er class and order went;
" And stopping, 'Now,' said he, 'my love, attend.'
" 'I do,' said she, 'but when will be an end?'
" 'When we have made some progress,—now begin,
" 'Which is the stigma, show me with the pin:
" 'Come, I have told you, dearest, let me see,
" 'Times very many,—tell it now to me.'

" 'Stigma! I know,—the things with yellow heads,
" 'That shed the dust, and grow upon the threads;
" 'You call them wives and husbands, but you know
" 'That is a joke—here, look, and I will show
" 'All I remember.'—Doleful was the look
" Of the preceptor, when he shut his book,
" (The system brought to aid them in their view,)
" And now with sighs return'd—'It will not do.'

" A handsome face first led him to suppose,
" There must be talent with such looks as those;

" The want of talent taught him now to find
" The face less handsome with so poor a mind;
" And half the beauty faded, when he found
" His cherish'd hopes were falling to the ground.

" Finch lost his spirit; but e'en then he sought
" For fancied powers: she might in time be taught.
" Sure there was nothing in that mind to fear;
" The favourite study did not yet appear.—

" Once he express'd a doubt if she could look
" For five succeeding minutes on a book;
" When, with awaken'd spirit, she replied,
" 'He was mistaken, and she would be tried.'

" With this delighted, he new hopes express'd,—
" 'How do I know?—She may abide the test?
" 'Men I have known, and famous in their day,
" 'Who were by chance directed in their way:
" 'I have been hasty.—Well, Augusta, well,
" 'What is your favourite reading? prithee tell;
" 'Our different tastes may different books require,—
" 'Yours I may not peruse, and yet admire:
" 'Do then explain'—'Good Heaven!' said she, in haste,
" 'How do I hate these lectures upon taste!'

" 'Sir, I can tell you I my mind applied
" 'To all my studies, and was not denied
" 'Praise for my progress——Are you satisfied?'

" 'Entirely, madam! else were I possess'd
" 'By a strong spirit who could never rest.
" 'Yes! yes, no more I question,—here I close
" 'The theme for ever—let us to repose.'"

TALES OF THE HALL.

BOOK X.

A Friend arrives at the Hall—Old Bachelors and Maids—Relation of one—His Parents—The first Courtship—The second—The third—Long Interval—Travel—Decline of Life—The fourth Lady—Conclusion.

TALES OF THE HALL.

BOOK X.

THE OLD BACHELOR.

SAVE their kind friend the Rector, Richard yet
Had not a favourite of his Brother met;
Now at the Hall that welcome guest appear'd,
By trust, by trials, and by time endear'd;
Of him the grateful Squire his love profess'd,
And full regard—he was of friends the best;
" Yet not to him alone this good I owe,
" This social pleasure that our friends bestow;
" The sex, that wrought in earlier life my woes,
" With loss of time, who murder'd my repose,
" They to my joys administer, nor vex
" Me more; and now I venerate the sex;
" And boast the friendship of a spinster kind,
" Cheerful and pleasant, to her fate resign'd;

" Then by her side my bachelor I place,
" And hold them honours to the human race.
" Yet these are they in tale and song display'd,
" The peevish man, and the repining maid;
" Creatures made up of misery and spite,
" Who taste no pleasures, except those they blight;
" From whom th' affrighten'd niece and nephew fly,—
" Fear'd while they live, and useless till they die.

" Not such these friends of mine; they never meant
" That youth should so be lost, or life be spent.
" They had warm passions, tender hopes, desires
" That youth indulges, and that love inspires;
" But fortune frown'd on their designs, displaced
" The views of hope, and love's gay dreams disgraced;
" Took from the soul her sunny views, and spread
" A cloud of dark but varying gloom instead:
" And shall we these with ridicule pursue,
" Because they did not what they could not do?
" If they their lot preferr'd, still why the jest
" On those who took the way they judged the best?
" But if they sought a change, and sought in vain,
" 'Tis worse than brutal to deride their pain—
" But you will see them; see the man I praise,
" The kind protector in my troubled days,

" Himself in trouble; you shall see him now,
" And learn his worth! and my applause allow."

This friend appear'd, with talents form'd to please,
And with some looks of sprightliness and ease;
To him indeed the ills of life were known,
But misery had not made him all her own.

They spoke on various themes, and George design'd
To show his brother this, the favourite mind;
To lead the friend, by subjects he could choose,
To paint himself, his life, and earlier views,
What he was bless'd to hope, what he was doom'd to lose.

They spoke of marriage, and he understood
Their call on him, and said, " It is not good
" To be alone, although alone to be
" Is freedom; so are men in deserts free;
" Men who unyoked and unattended groan,
" Condemn'd and grieved to walk their way alone:
" Whatever ills a married pair betide,
" Each feels a stay, a comfort, or a guide;
" 'Not always comfort,' will our wits reply.—
" Wits are not judges, nor the cause shall try.

" Have I not seen, when grief his visits paid,
" That they were easier by communion made?
" True, with the quiet times and days serene,
" There have been flying clouds of care and spleen;
" But is not man, the solitary, sick
" Of his existence, sad and splenetic?
" And who will help him, when such evils come,
" To bear the pressure or to clear the gloom?

" Do you not find, that joy within the breast
" Of the unwedded man is soon suppress'd;
" While, to the bosom of a wife convey'd,
" Increase is by participation made?—
" The lighted lamp that gives another light,
" Say, is it by th' imparted blaze less bright?
" Are not both gainers when the heart's distress
" Is so divided, that the pain is less?
" And when the tear has stood in either eye,
" Love's sun shines out, and they are quickly dry."

He ended here,—but would he not confess,
How came these feelings on his mind to press?
He would! nor fear'd his weakness to display
To men like them; their weakness too had they.

Bright shone the fire, wine sparkled, sordid care
Was banish'd far, at least appear'd not there;
A kind and social spirit each possess'd,
And thus began his tale the friendly guest.

" Near to my father's mansion,—but apart,
" I must acknowledge, from my father's heart—
" Dwelt a keen sportsman, in a pleasant seat;
" Nor met the neighbours as should neighbours meet:
" To them revenge appear'd a kind of right,
" A lawful pleasure, an avow'd delight;
" Their neighbours too blew up their passion's fire,
" And urged the anger of each rival-squire;
" More still their waspish tempers to inflame,
" A party-spirit, friend of anger, came:
" Oft would my father cry, 'that tory-knave,
" 'That villain-placeman, would the land enslave.'
" Not that his neighbour had indeed a place,
" But would accept one—that was his disgrace;
" Who, in his turn, was sure my father plann'd
" To revolutionize his native land.
" He dared the most destructive things advance,
" And even pray'd for liberty to France;

" Had still good hope that Heaven would grant his
prayer,
" That he might see a revolution there.
" At this the tory-squire was much perplex'd,
" ' Freedom in France!—what will he utter next?
" ' Sooner should I in Paris look to see
" ' An English army sent their guard to be.'

" My poor mamma, who had her mind subdued
" By whig-control, and hated every feud,
" Would have her neighbour met with mind serene;
" But fiercer spirit fired the tory-queen:
" My parents both had given her high disgust,
" Which she resenting said, Revenge is just;
" And till th' offending parties chose to stoop,
" She judged it right to keep resentment up;
" Could she in friendship with a woman live
" Who could the insult of a man forgive?
" Did not her husband in a crowded room
" Once call her idiot, and the thing was dumb?
" The man's attack was brutal to be sure,
" But she no less an idiot to endure.

" This lofty dame, with unrelenting soul,
" Had a fair girl to govern and control;

" The dear Maria!—whom, when first I met,—
" Shame on this weakness! do I feel it yet?

" The parent's anger, you will oft-times see,
" Prepares the children's minds for amity;
" Youth will not enter into such debate,
" 'Tis not in them to cherish groundless hate;
" Nor can they feel men's quarrels or their cares,
" Of whig or tory, partridges or hares.

" Long ere we loved, this gentle girl and I
" Gave to our parents' discord many a sigh;
" It was not ours,—and when the meeting came,
" It pleased us much to find our thoughts the same;
" But grief and trouble in our minds arose
" From the fierce spirits we could not compose;
" And much it vex'd us that the friends so dear
" To us should foes among themselves appear.

" Such was this maid, the angel of her race,
" Whom I had loved in any time and place,
" But in a time and place which chance assign'd,
" When it was almost treason to be kind;
" When we had vast impediments in view,
" Then wonder not that love in terror grew

" With double speed—we look'd, and strove to find
" A kindred spirit in the hostile mind;
" But is it hostile! there appears no sign
" In those dear looks of warfare—none have mine;
" At length I whisper'd—'Would that war might cease
" 'Between our houses, and that all was peace!'
" A sweet confusion on her features rose,
" 'She could not bear to think of having foes,
" 'When we might all as friends and neighbours live,
" 'And for that blessing, O! what would she give?—'
" 'Then let us try and our endeavours blend,'
" I said, 'to bring these quarrels to an end;'
" Thus, with one purpose in our hearts, we strove,
" And, if no more, increased our secret love;
" Love that with such impediments in view
" To meet the growing danger stronger grew:
" And from that time each heart, resolved and sure,
" Grew firm in hope, and patient to endure.

" To those who know this season of delight
" I need not strive their feelings to excite;
" To those who know not the delight or pain,
" The best description would be lent in vain;
" And to the grieving, who will no more find
" The bower of bliss, to paint it were unkind;

" I pass it by, to tell that long we tried
" To bring our fathers over to our side;
" 'Twas bootless on their wives our skill to try,
" For one would not, and one in vain comply.

" First I began my father's heart to move,
" By boldly saying, 'We are born to love;'
" My father answer'd, with an air of ease,
" 'Well! very well! be loving if you please!
" 'Except a man insults us or offends,
" 'In my opinion we should all be friends.'

" This gain'd me nothing; little would accrue
" From clearing points so useless though so true;
" But with some pains I brought him to confess,
" That to forgive our wrongs is to redress:

" 'It might be so,' he answer'd, yet with doubt,
" That it might not, 'but what is this about?'
" I dared not speak directly, but I strove
" To keep my subjects, harmony and love.

" Coolly my father look'd, and much enjoy'd
" The broken eloquence his eye destroy'd;
" Yet less confused, and more resolved at last,
" With bolder effort to my point I past;

" ' And fondly speaking of my peerless maid,
" I call'd her worth and beauty to my aid,
" ' Then make her mine!' I said, and for his favour
pray'd.

" My father's look was one I seldom saw,
" It gave no pleasure, nor created awe;
" It was the kind of cool contemptuous smile
" Of witty persons, overcharged with bile;
" At first he spoke not, nor at last to me—

" ' Well now, and what if such a thing could be?
" ' What, if the boy should his addresses pay
" ' To the tall girl, would that old tory say?
" ' I have no hatred to the dog,—but, still,
" ' It was some pleasure when I used him ill;
" ' This I must lose if we should brethren be,
" ' Yet may be not, for brethren disagree;
" ' The fool is right,—there is no bar in life
" ' Against their marriage,—let her be his wife.
" ' Well, sir, you hear me!'—Never man complied,
" And left a beggar so dissatisfied;
" Though all was granted, yet was grace refused;
" I felt as one indulged, and yet abused,
" And yet, although provoked, I was not unamused.

" In a reply like this appear'd to meet
" All that encourage hope, and that defeat;
" Consent, though cool, had been for me enough,
" But this consent had something of reproof;
" I had prepared my answer to his rage,
" With his contempt I thought not to engage:
" I, like a hero, would my castle storm,
" And meet the giant in his proper form;
" Then, conquering him, would set my princess free,
" This would a trial and a triumph be:
" When lo! a sneering menial brings the keys,
" And cries in scorn, 'Come, enter, if you please;
" 'You'll find the lady sitting on her bed,
" 'And 'tis expected that you woo and wed.'

" Yet not so easy was my conquest found;
" I met with trouble ere with triumph crown'd.
" Triumph, alas!—My father little thought,
" A king at home, how other minds are wrought;
" True, his meek neighbour was a gentle squire,
" And had a soul averse from wrath and ire;
" He answer'd frankly, when to him I went,
" 'I give you little, sir, in my consent:'
" He and my mother were to us inclined,
" The powerless party with the peaceful mind;

" But that meek man was destined to obey
" A sovereign lady's unremitted sway;
" Who bore no partial, no divided rule,
" All were obedient pupils in her school.
" She had religious zeal, both strong and sour,
" That gave an active sternness to her power;
" But few could please her, she herself was one
" By whom that deed was very seldom done;
" With such a being, so disposed to feed
" Contempt and scorn—how was I to succeed?
" But love commanded, and I made my prayer
" To the stern lady, with an humble air;
" Said all that lovers hope, all measures tried
" That love suggested, and bow'd down to pride.

" Yes! I have now the tygress in my eye—
" When I had ceased and waited her reply,
" A pause ensued, and then she slowly rose,
" With bitter smile predictive of my woes;
" A look she saw was plainly understood——

" ' Admire my daughter! Sir, you're very good.
" ' The girl is decent, take her all in all,—
" ' Genteel we hope—perhaps a thought too tall;
" ' A daughter's portion hers—you'll think her fortune
small.

" 'Perhaps her uncles, in a cause so good,
" 'Would do a little for their flesh and blood;
" 'We are not ill allied,—and say we make
" 'Her portion decent—whither would you take?
" 'Is there some cottage on your father's ground,
" 'Where may a dwelling for the girl be found?
" 'Or a small farm,—your mother understands
" 'How to make useful such a pair of hands.

" 'But this we drop at present, if you please,
" 'We shall have leisure for such things as these;
" 'They will be proper ere you fix the day
" 'For the poor girl to honour and obey;
" 'At present therefore we may put an end
" 'To our discourse——Good morrow to you, friend!'

" Then, with a solemn curtesy and profound,
" Her laughing eye she lifted from the ground,
" And left me lost in thought, and gazing idly round.

" Still we had hope, and, growing bold in time,
" I would engage the father in our crime;
" But he refused, for though he wish'd us well,
" He said, 'he must not make his house a hell;—'
" And sure the meaning look that I convey'd
" Did not inform him that the hell was made.

" Still hope existed that a mother's heart
" Would in a daughter's feelings take a part;
" Nor was it vain,—for there is found access
" To a hard heart, in time of its distress:

" The mother sicken'd, and the daughter sigh'd,
" And we petition'd till our queen complied;
" She thought of dying, and if power must cease,
" Better to make, than cause, th' expected peace;
" And sure this kindness, mixing with the blood,
" Its balmy influence caused the body's good;
" For as a charm, it work'd upon the frame
" Of the reviving and relenting dame;
" For when recover'd, she no more opposed
" Her daughter's wishes.——Here contention closed.

" Then bliss ensued, so exquisitely sweet,
" That with it once, once only, we can meet;
" For though we love again, and though once more
" We feel th' enlivening hope we felt before,
" Still the pure freshness of the joy that cast
" Its sweet around us is for ever past.
" O! time to memory precious,—ever dear,
" Though ever painful—this eventful year;
" What bliss is now in view! and now what woes
appear!

" Sweet hours of expectation!—I was gone
" To the vile town to press our business on;
" To urge its formal instruments,—and lo!
" Comes with dire looks a messenger of woe,
" With tidings sad as death!—With all my speed
" I reach'd her home!—but that pure soul was freed—
" She was no more—for ever shut that eye,
" That look'd all soul, as if it could not die;
" It could not see me—O! the strange distress
" Of these new feelings!—misery's excess;
" What can describe it? words will not express.
" When I look back upon that dreadful scene,
" I feel renew'd the anguish that has been;
" And reason trembles——Yes! you bid me cease,
" Nor try to think; but I will think in peace.—
" Unbid and unforbidden, to the room
" I went, a gloomy wretch amid that gloom;
" And there the lovely being on her bed
" Shrowded and cold was laid—Maria dead!
" There was I left,—and I have now no thought
" Remains with me, how fear or fancy wrought;
" I know I gazed upon the marble cheek,
" And pray'd the dear departed girl to speak—
" Further I know not, for, till years were fled,
" All was extinguish'd—all with her was dead.

" I had a general terror, dread of all
" That could a thinking, feeling man befall;
" I was desirous from myself to run,
" And something, but I knew not what, to shun:
" There was a blank from this I cannot fill,
" It is a puzzle and a terror still.
" Yet did I feel some intervals of bliss,
" Ev'n with the horrors of a fate like this;
" And dreams of wonderful construction paid
" For waking horror—dear angelic maid!

" When peace return'd, unfelt for many a year,
" And Hope, discarded flatterer, dared t' appear;
" I heard of my estate, how free from debt,
" And of the comforts life afforded yet;
" Beside that best of comforts in a life
" So sad as mine—a fond and faithful wife.
" My gentle mother, now a widow, made
" These strong attempts to guide me or persuade.

" ' Much time is lost,' she said, ' but yet my son
" ' May, in the race of life, have much to run;
" ' When I am gone, thy life to thee will seem
" ' Lonely and sad, a melancholy dream;
" ' Get thee a wife—I will not say to love,
" ' But one, a friend in thy distress to prove;

" ' One who will kindly help thee to sustain
" ' Thy spirit's burden in its hours of pain;
" ' Say, will you marry?'—I in haste replied,
" ' And who would be the self-devoted bride?
" ' There is a melancholy power that reigns
" ' Tyrant within me—who would bear his chains,
" ' And hear them clicking every wretched hour,
" ' With will to aid me, but without the power?
" ' But if such one were found with easy mind,
" ' Who would not ask for raptures——I'm resign'd.'

" ' 'Tis quite enough,' my gentle mother cried,
" ' We leave the raptures, and will find the bride.'

" There was a lady near us, quite discreet,
" Whom in our visits 'twas our chance to meet,
" One grave and civil, who had no desire
" That men should praise her beauties or admire;
" She in our walks would sometimes take my arm,
" But had no foolish fluttering or alarm;
" She wish'd no heart to wound, no truth to prove,
" And seem'd, like me, as one estranged from love;
" My mother praised her, and with so much skill,
" She gave a certain bias to my will;
" But calm indeed our courtship; I profess'd
" A due regard—My mother did the rest;

" Who soon declared that we should love, and grow
" As fond a couple as the world could show;
" And talk'd of boys and girls with so much glee,
" That I began to wish the thing could be.

" Still when the day that soon would come was named
" I felt a cold fit, and was half ashamed;
" But we too far proceeded to revoke,
" And had been much too serious for a joke:
" I shook away the fear that man annoys,
" And thought a little of the girls and boys.

" A week remain'd,—for seven succeeding days
" Nor man nor woman might control my ways;
" For seven dear nights I might to rest retire
" At my own time, and none the cause require;
" For seven blest days I might go in and out,
" And none demand, 'Sir, what are you about?'
" For one whole week I might at will discourse
" On any subject, with a freeman's force.

" Thus while I thought, I utter'd, as men sing
" In under-voice, reciting 'With this ring,'
" That when the hour should come, I might not dread
" These, or the words that follow'd, 'I thee wed.'

" Such was my state of mind, exulting now
" And then depress'd—I cannot tell you how—
" When a poor lady, whom her friends could send
" On any message, a convenient friend,
" Who had all feelings of her own o'ercome,
" And could pronounce to any man his doom;
" Whose heart indeed was marble, but whose face
" Assumed the look adapted to the case;
" Enter'd my room, commission'd to assuage
" What was foreseen, my sorrow and my rage.

" It seem'd the lady whom I could prefer,
" And could my much-loved freedom lose for her,
" Had bold attempts, but not successful, made,
" The heart of some rich cousin to invade;
" Who, half resisting, half complying, kept
" A cautious distance, and the business slept.

" This prudent swain his own importance knew,
" And swore to part the now affianced two:
" Fill'd with insidious purpose, forth he went,
" Profess'd his love, and woo'd her to consent:
" 'Ah! were it true!' she sigh'd; he boldly swore
" His love sincere, and mine was sought no more.

" All this the witch at dreadful length reveal'd,
" And begg'd me calmly to my fate to yield:
" Much pains she took engagements old to state,
" And hoped to hear me curse my cruel fate,
" Threat'ning my luckless life; and thought it strange
" In me to bear the unexpected change:
" In my calm feelings she beheld disguise,
" And told of some strange wildness in my eyes.

" But there was nothing in the eye amiss,
" And the heart calmly bore a stroke like this;
" Not so my mother; though of gentle kind,
" She could no mercy for the creature find.

" 'Vile plot!' she said.—'But, madam, if they plot,
" 'And you would have revenge, disturb them not.'

" 'What can we do, my son?'—'Consult our ease,
" 'And do just nothing, madam, if you please.'

" 'What will be, said?'—'We need not that discuss;
" 'Our friends and neighbours will do that for us.'

" 'Do you so lightly, son, your loss sustain?'—
" 'Nay, my dear madam, but I count it gain.'

" 'The world will blame us sure, if we be still.'—
" 'And, if we stir, you may be sure it will.'

" 'Not to such loss your father had agreed.'—
" 'No, for my father's had been loss indeed.'

" With gracious smile my mother gave assent,
" And let th' affair slip by with much content.

" Some old dispute, the lover meant should rise,
" Some point of strife they could not compromise,
" Displeased the squire—he from the field withdrew,
" Not quite conceal'd, not fully placed in view;
" But half advancing, half retreating, kept
" At his old distance, and the business slept.

" Six years had past, and forty ere the six,
" When Time began to play his usual tricks:
" The locks once comely in a virgin's sight,
" Locks of pure brown, display'd th' encroaching white;
" The blood once fervid now to cool began,
" And Time's strong pressure to subdue the man:
" I rode or walk'd as I was wont before,
" But now the bounding spirit was no more;
" A moderate pace would now my body heat,
" A walk of moderate length distress my feet.

" I show'd my stranger-guest those hills sublime,
" But said, 'the view is poor, we need not climb.'
" At a friend's mansion I began to dread
" The cold neat parlour, and the gay glazed bed;
" At home I felt a more decided taste,
" And must have all things in my order placed;
" I ceased to hunt, my horses pleased me less,
" My dinner more; I learn'd to play at chess;
" I took my dog and gun, but saw the brute
" Was disappointed that I did not shoot;
" My morning walks I now could bear to lose,
" And bless'd the shower that gave me not to choose:
" In fact, I felt a languor stealing on;
" The active arm, the agile hand were gone;
" Small daily actions into habits grew,
" And new dislike to forms and fashions new;
" I loved my trees in order to dispose,
" I number'd peaches, look'd how stocks arose,
" Told the same story oft—in short, began to prose.

" My books were changed; I now preferr'd the truth
" To the light reading of unsettled youth;
" Novels grew tedious, but by choice or chance,
" I still had interest in the wild romance:
" There is an age, we know, when tales of love
" Form the sweet pabulum our hearts approve;

" Then as we read we feel, and are indeed,
" We judge, th' heroic men of whom we read;
" But in our after life these fancies fail,
" We cannot be the heroes of the tale;
" The parts that Cliffords, Mordaunts, Bevilles play
" We cannot,—cannot be so smart and gay.

" But all the mighty deeds and matchless powers
" Of errant knights we never fancied ours,
" And thus the prowess of each gifted knight
" Must at all times create the same delight;
" Lovelace a forward youth might hope to seem,
" But Lancelot never,—that he could not dream;
" Nothing reminds us in the magic page
" Of old romance, of our declining age:
" If once our fancy mighty dragons slew,
" This is no more than fancy now can do;
" But when the heroes of a novel come,
" Conquer'd and conquering, to a drawing-room,
" We no more feel the vanity that sees
" Within ourselves what we admire in these,
" And so we leave the modern tale, to fly
" From realm to realm with Tristram or Sir Guy.

" Not quite a Quixote, I could not suppose
" That queens would call me to subdue their foes;

" But, by a voluntary weakness sway'd,
" When fancy call'd, I willingly obey'd.

" Such I became, and I believed my heart
" Might yet be pierced by some peculiar dart
" Of right heroic kind, and I could prove
" Fond of some peerless nymph who deign'd to love,
" Some high-soul'd virgin, who had spent her time
" In studies grave, heroic and sublime;
" Who would not like me less that I had spent
" Years eight and forty, just the age of Kent;
" But not with Kent's discretion, for I grew
" Fond of a creature whom my fancy drew;
" A kind of beings who are never found
" On middle-earth, but grow on fairy-ground.

" These found I not; but I had luck to find
" A mortal woman of this fairy kind;
" A thin, tall, upright, serious, slender maid,
" Who in my own romantic regions stray'd;
" From the world's glare to this sweet vale retired,
" To dwell unseen, unsullied, unadmired;
" In all her virgin excellence, above
" The gaze of crowds, and hopes of vulgar love.

" We spoke of noble deeds in happier times,
" Of glorious virtues, of debasing crimes:
" Warm was the season, and the subject too,
" And therefore warm in our discourse we grew.
" Love made such haste, that ere a month was flown
" Since first we met, he had us for his own:
" Riches are trifles in an hero's sight,
" And lead to questions low and unpolite;
" I nothing said of money or of land,
" But bent my knee, and fondly ask'd her hand;
" And the dear lady, with a grace divine,
" Gave it, and frankly answer'd, 'it is thine.'

" Our reading was not to romance confined,
" But still it gave its colour to the mind;
" Gave to our studies something of its force,
" And made profound and tender our discourse;
" Our subjects all, and our religion, took
" The grave and solemn spirit of our book:
" And who had seen us walk, or heard us read,
" Would say, 'these lovers are sublime indeed.'

" I knew not why, but when the day was named
" My ardent wishes felt a little tamed;
" My mother's sickness then awaked my grief,
" And yet, to own the truth, was some relief;

" It left uncertain that decisive time
" That made my feelings nervous and sublime.

" Still all was kindness, and at morn and eve
" I made a visit, talk'd, and took my leave:
" Kind were the lady's looks, her eyes were bright,
" And swam, I thought, in exquisite delight;
" A lovely red suffused the virgin cheek,
" And spoke more plainly than the tongue could speak;
" Plainly all seem'd to promise love and joy,
" Nor fear'd we ought that might our bliss destroy.

" Engaged by business, I one morn delay'd
" My usual call on the accomplish'd maid;
" But soon, that small impediment removed,
" I paid the visit that decisive proved;
" For the fair lady had, with grieving heart,
" So I believed, retired to sigh apart:
" I saw her friend, and begg'd her to intreat
" My gentle nymph her sighing swain to meet.

" The gossip gone—What dæmon, in his spite
" To love and man, could my frail mind excite,
" And lead me curious on, against all sense of right?
" There met my eye, unclosed, a closet's door—
" Shame! how could I the secrets there explore?

" Pride, honour, friendship, love, condemn'd the deed,
" And yet, in spite of all, I could proceed!
" I went, I saw—Shall I describe the hoard
" Of precious worth in seal'd deposits stored
" Of sparkling hues? Enough—enough is told,
" 'Tis not for man such mysteries to unfold.
" Thus far I dare—Whene'er those orbits swam
" In that blue liquid that restrain'd their flame,
" As showers the sunbeams—when the crimson glow
" Of the red rose o'erspread those cheeks of snow,
" I saw, but not the cause—'twas not the red
" Of transient blush that o'er her face was spread;
" 'Twas not the lighter red, that partly streaks
" The Catherine pear, that brighten'd o'er her cheeks,
" Nor scarlet blush of shame—but such disclose
" The velvet petals of the Austrian rose
" When first unfolded, warm the glowing hue,
" Nor cold as rouge, but deep'ning on the view:
" Such were those cheeks—the causes unexplored
" Were now detected in that secret hoard;
" And ever to that rich recess would turn
" My mind, and cause for such effect discern.
" Such was my fortune, O! my friends, and such
" The end of lofty hopes that grasp'd too much.
" This was, indeed, a trying time in life,
" I lost at once a mother and a wife;

" Yet compensation came in time for these,
" And what I lost in joy, I gain'd in ease."—

" But," said the Squire, "did thus your courtship cease?
" Resign'd your mistress her betroth'd in peace?"—

" Yes; and had sense her feelings to restrain,
" Nor ask'd me once my conduct to explain;
" But me she saw those swimming eyes explore,
" And explanation she required no more:
" Friend to the last, I left her with regret—
" Nay, leave her not, for we are neighbours yet.

" These views extinct, I travell'd, not with taste,
" But so that time ran wickedly to waste;
" I penn'd some notes, and might a book have made,
" But I had no connexion with the trade;
" Bridges and churches, towers and halls, I saw,
" Maids and madonnas, and could sketch and draw:
" Yes, I had made a book, but that my pride
" In the not making was more gratified.

" There was one feeling upon foreign ground,
" That more distressing than the rest was found;

" That though with joy I should my country see,
" There none had pleasure in expecting me.

" I now was sixty, but could walk and eat;
" My food was pleasant, and my slumbers sweet;
" But what could urge me at a day so late
" To think of women?—my unlucky fate.
" It was not sudden; I had no alarms,
" But was attack'd when resting on my arms;
" Like the poor soldier; when the battle raged
" The man escaped, though twice or thrice engaged,
" But when it ended, in a quiet spot
" He fell, the victim of a random-shot.

" With my good friend the Vicar oft I spent
" The evening hours in quiet, as I meant;
" He was a friend in whom, although untried
" By ought severe, I found I could confide;
" A pleasant, sturdy disputant was he,
" Who had a daughter—such the Fates decree,
" To prove how weak is man—poor yielding man, like me.

" Time after time the maid went out and in,
" Ere love was yet beginning to begin;

" The first awakening proof, the early doubt,
" Rose from observing she went in and out.
" My friend, though careless, seem'd my mind to explore,
" 'Why do you look so often at the door?'
" I then was cautious, but it did no good,
" For she, at least, my meanings understood;
" But to the Vicar nothing she convey'd
" Of what she thought—she did not feel afraid.

" I must confess, this creature in her mind
" Nor face had beauty that a man would blind;
" No poet of her matchless charms would write,
" Yet sober praise they fairly would excite:
" She was a creature form'd man's heart to make
" Serenely happy, not to pierce and shake;
" If she were tried for breaking human hearts,
" Men would acquit her—she had not the arts;
" Yet without art, at first without design,
" She soon became the arbitress of mine;
" Without pretensions—nay, without pretence,
" But by a native strange intelligence
" Women possess when they behold a man
" Whom they can tease, and are assured they can;

" Then 'tis their soul's delight and pride to reign
" O'er the fond slave, to give him ease or pain,
" And stretch and loose by turns the weighty viewless
chain.

" Though much she knew, yet nothing could she prove;
" I had not yet confess'd the crime of love;
" But in an hour when guardian-angels sleep,
" I fail'd the secret of my soul to keep;
" And then I saw the triumph in those eyes
" That spoke—'Ay, now you are indeed my prize.'
" I almost thought I saw compassion, too,
" For all the cruel things she meant to do.
" Well I can call to mind the managed air
" That gave no comfort, that brought no despair,
" That in a dubious balance held the mind,
" To each side turning, never much inclined.

" She spoke with kindness—thought the honour high,
" And knew not how to give a fit reply;
" She could not, would not, dared not, must not deem
" Such language proof of ought but my esteem;
" It made her proud—she never could forget
" My partial thoughts,—she felt her much in debt:

" She who had never in her life indulged
" The thought of hearing what I now divulged,
" I who had seen so many and so much,—
" It was an honour—she would deem it such:
" Our different years, indeed, would put an end
" To other views, but still her father's friend
" To her, she humbly hoped, would his regard extend
" Thus saying nothing, all she meant to say,
" She play'd the part the sex delights to play;
" Now by some act of kindness giving scope
" To the new workings of excited hope,
" Then by an air of something like disdain,
" But scarcely seen, repelling it again;
" Then for a season, neither cold nor kind,
" She kept a sort of balance in the mind,
" And as his pole a dancer on the rope,
" The equal poise on both sides kept me up.

" Is it not strange that man can fairly view
" Pursuit like this, and yet his point pursue?
" While he the folly fairly will confess,
" And even feel the danger of success?
" But so it is, and nought the Circes care
" How ill their victims with their poison fare,

" When thus they trifle, and with quiet soul
" Mix their ingredients in the maddening bowl.
" Their high regard, the softness of their air,
" The pitying grief that saddens at a prayer,
" Their grave petitions for the peace of mind
" That they determine you shall never find,
" And all their vain amazement that a man
" Like you should love—they wonder how you can.

" For months the idler play'd her wicked part,
" Then fairly gave the secret of her heart.
" 'She hoped'—I now the smiling gipsy view—
" 'Her father's friend would be her lover's too,
" 'Young Henry Gale'—But why delay so long?—
" She could not tell—she fear'd it might be wrong,
" 'But I was good'—I knew not, I was weak,
" And spoke as love directed me to speak.

" When in my arms their boy and girl I take,
" I feel a fondness for the mother's sake;
" But though the dears some softening thoughts excite,
" I have no wishes for the father's right.

" Now all is quiet, and the mind sustains
" Its proper comforts, its befitting pains;

" The heart reposes; it has had its share
" Of love, as much as it could fairly bear,
" And what is left in life, that now demands its care?

" For O! my friends, if this were all indeed,
" Could we believe that nothing would succeed;
" If all were but this daily dose of life,
" Without a care or comfort, child or wife;
" These walks for health with nothing more in view,
" This doing nothing, and with labour too;
" This frequent asking when 'tis time to dine,
" This daily dozing o'er the news and wine;
" This age's riddle, when each day appears
" So very long, so very short the years;
" If this were all—but let me not suppose—
" What then were life! whose virtues, trials, woes,
" Would sleep th' eternal sleep, and there the scene
would close.

" This cannot be—but why has Time a pace
" That seems unequal in our mortal race?
" Quick is that pace in early life, but slow,
" Tedious and heavy, as we older grow;
" But yet, though slow, the movements are alike,
" And with no force upon the memory strike,

" And therefore tedious as we find them all,
" They leave us nothing we in view recal;
" But days that we so dull and heavy knew
" Are now as moments passing in review,
" And hence arises ancient men's report,
" That days are tedious, and yet years are short."

TALES OF THE HALL.

BOOK XI.

A Mother's Advice—Trials for a young Lady—Ancient Lovers—The Mother a Wife—Grandmamma—Genteel Economy—Frederick, a young Collegian—Grandmamma dies—Retreat with Biddy—Comforts of the Poor—Return Home—Death of the Husband—Nervous Disorders—Conversion—Frederick a Teacher—Retreat to Sidmouth—Self-examination—The Mother dies—Frederick a Soldier—Retirement with a Friend—Their Happiness how interrupted—Frederick an Actor—Is dismissed and supported—A last Adventure.

TALES OF THE HALL.

BOOK XI.

THE MAID'S STORY.

THREE days remain'd their friend, and then again
The Brothers left, themselves to entertain;
When spake the younger—"It would please me well
"To hear thy spinster-friend her story tell;
"And our attention would be nobly paid
"Thus to compare the Bachelor and Maid."

"Frank as she is," replied the Squire, "nor one
"Is more disposed to show what she has done
"With time, or time with her; yet all her care
"And every trial she might not declare
"To one a stranger; but to me, her friend,
"She has the story of those trials penn'd;
"These shalt thou hear, for well the maid I know,
"And will her efforts and her conquests show.

" Jacques is abroad, and we alone shall dine,
" And then to give this lady's tale be mine;
" Thou wilt attend to this good spinster's life,
" And grieve and wonder she is not a wife;
" But if we judge by either words or looks,
" Her mode of life, her morals, or her books,
" Her pure devotion, unaffected sense,
" Her placid air, her mild benevolence,
" Her gay good humour, and her manners free,
" She is as happy as a maid can be;
" If as a wife, I know not, and decline
" Question like this, till I can judge of thine."

Then from a secret hoard drew forth the Squire
His tale, and said, " Attention I require—
" My verse you may condemn, my theme you must
admire."

I to your kindness speak, let that prevail,
And of my frailty judge as beings frail.——

My father dying, to my mother left
An infant charge, of all things else bereft;

Poor, but experienced in the world, she knew
What others did, and judged what she could do;
Beauty she justly weigh'd, was never blind
To her own interest, and she read mankind:
She view'd my person with approving glance,
And judged the way my fortune to advance;
Taught me betimes that person to improve,
And make a lawful merchandize of love;
Bade me my temper in subjection keep,
And not permit my vigilance to sleep;
I was not one, a miss, who might presume
Now to be crazed by mirth, now sunk in gloom;
Nor to be fretful, vapourish, or give way
To spleen and anger, as the wealthy may;.
But I must please, and all I felt of pride,
Contempt, and hatred, I must cast aside.

" Have not one friend," my mother cried, " not one;
" That bane of our romantic triflers shun;
" Suppose her true, can she afford you aid?
" Suppose her false, your purpose is betray'd;
" And then in dubious points, and matters nice,
" How can you profit by a child's advice?
" While you are writing on from post to post,
" Your hour is over, and a man is lost;

" Girls of their hearts are scribbling; their desires,
" And what the folly of the heart requires,
" Dupes to their dreams—but I the truth impart,
" You cannot, child, afford to have a heart;
" Think nothing of it; to yourself be true,
" And keep life's first great business in your view;—
" Take it, dear Martha, for a useful rule,
" She who is poor is ugly or a fool;
" Or, worse than either, has a bosom fill'd
" With soft emotions, and with raptures thrill'd.

" Read not too much, nor write in verse or prose,
" For then you make the dull and foolish foes;
" Yet those who do, deride not nor condemn,
" It is not safe to raise up foes in them;
" For though they harm you not, as blockheads do,
" There is some malice in the scribbling crew."

Such her advice; full hard with her had dealt
The world, and she the usage keenly felt.

" Keep your good name," she said, " and that to keep
" You must not suffer vigilance to sleep:
" Some have, perhaps, the name of chaste retain'd,
" When nought of chastity itself remain'd;

" But there is danger—few have means to blind
" The keen-eyed world, and none to make it kind.

" And one thing more—to free yourself from foes
" Never a secret to your friend disclose;
" Secrets with girls, like loaded guns with boys,
" Are never valued till they make a noise;
" To show how trusted, they their power display;
" To show how worthy, they the trust betray;
" Like pence in children's pockets secrets lie
" In female bosoms—they must burn or fly.

" Let not your heart be soften'd; if it be,
" Let not the man his softening influence see;
" For the most fond will sometimes tyrants prove,
" And wound the bosom where they trace the love.
" But to your fortune look, on that depend
" For your life's comfort, comforts that attend
" On wealth alone—wealth gone, they have their end."

Such were my mother's cares to mend my lot,
And such her pupil they succeeded not.

It was conceived the person I had then
Might lead to serious thoughts some wealthy men,

Who having none their purpose to oppose
Would soon be won their wishes to disclose:
My mother thought I was the very child
By whom the old and amorous are beguiled;
So mildly gay, so ignorantly fair,
And pure, no doubt, as sleeping infants are:
Then I had lessons how to look and move,
And, I repeat, make merchandize of love.

Thrice it was tried if one so young could bring
Old wary men to buy the binding ring;
And on the taper finger, to whose tip
The fond old swain would press his withering lip,
Place the strong charm:—and one would win my heart
By re-assuming youth—a trying part;
Girls, he supposed, all knew the young were bold,
And he would show that spirit in the old;
In boys they loved to hear the rattling tongue,
And he would talk as idly as the young;
He knew the vices our Lotharios boast,
And he would show of every vice the ghost,
The evil's self, without disguise or dress,
Vice in its own pure native ugliness;
Not as the drunkenness of slaves to prove
Vice hateful, but that seeing, I might love.

He drove me out, and I was pleased to see
Care of himself, it served as care for me;
For he would tell me, that he should not spare
Man, horse, or carriage, if I were not there:
Provoked at last, my malice I obey'd,
And smiling said, "Sir, I am not afraid."

This check'd his spirit; but he said, "Could you
"Have charge so rich, you would be careful too."

And he, indeed, so very slowly drove,
That we dismiss'd the over-cautious love.

My next admirer was of equal age,
And wish'd the child's affection to engage,
And keep the fluttering bird a victim in his cage:
He had no portion of his rival's glee,
But gravely praised the gravity in me;
Religious, moral, both in word and deed,
But warmly disputatious in his creed:
Wild in his younger time, as we were told,
And therefore like a penitent when old.
Strange! he should wish a lively girl to look
Upon the methods his repentance took.

Then he would say, he was no more a rake
To squander money for his passions' sake;
Yet, upon proper terms, as man discreet,
He with my mother was disposed to treat,
To whom he told, "the price of beauty fell
"In every market, and but few could sell;
"That trade in India, once alive and brisk,
"Was over done, and scarcely worth the risk."
Then stoop'd to speak of board, and what for life
A wife would cost—— if he should take a wife.

Hardly he bargain'd, and so much desired,
That we demurr'd; and he, displeased, retired.

And now I hoped to rest, nor act again
The paltry part for which I felt disdain,
When a third lover came within our view,
And somewhat differing from the former two;
He had been much abroad, and he had seen
The world's weak side, and read the hearts of men;
But all, it seem'd, this study could produce,
Was food for spleen, derision, and abuse;
He levell'd all, as one who had intent
To clear the vile and spot the innocent;
He praised my sense, and said I ought to be
From girl's restraint and nursery maxims free;

He praised my mother; but he judged her wrong
To keep us from th' admiring world so long;
He praised himself; and then his vices named,
And call'd them follies, and was not ashamed.
He more than hinted that the lessons taught
By priests were all with superstition fraught;
And I must think them for the crowd design'd,
Not to alarm the free and liberal mind.

Wisdom with him was virtue. They were wrong
And weak, he said, who went not with the throng;
Man must his passions order and restrain
In all that gives his fellow-subjects pain;
But yet of guilt he would in pity speak,
And as he judged, the wicked were the weak.

Such was the lover of a simple maid,
Who seem'd to call his logic to his aid,
And to mean something: I will not pretend
To judge the purpose of my reasoning friend,
Who was dismiss'd, in quiet to complain
That so much labour was bestow'd in vain.

And now my mother seem'd disposed to try
A life of reason and tranquillity;

Ere this, her health and spirits were the best,
Hers the day's trifling, and the nightly rest;
But something new was in her mind instill'd;
Unquiet thoughts the matron bosom fill'd;
For five and forty peaceful years she bore
Her placid looks, and dress becoming wore:
She could a compliment with pleasure take,
But no absurd impression could it make.
Now were her nerves disorder'd: she was weak,
And must the help of a physician seek;
A Scotch physician, who had just began
To settle near us, quite a graceful man,
And very clever, with a soft address,
That would his meaning tenderly express.

Sick as my mother seem'd, when he inquired
If she was ill, he found her well attired;
She purchased wares so showy and so fine,
The venders all believed th' indulgence mine:—
But I, who thrice was woo'd, had lovers three,
Must now again a very infant be;
While the good lady, twenty years a wife,
Was to decide the colour of his life:
And she decided. She was wont t' appear
To these unequal marriages severe;

Her thoughts of such with energy she told,
And was repulsive, dignified, and cold;
But now, like monarchs weary of a throne,
She would no longer reign—at least alone.

She gave her pulse, and, with a manner sweet,
Wish'd him to feel how kindly they could beat;
And 'tis a thing quite wonderful to tell
How soon he understood them, and how well.

Now, when she married, I from home was sent,
With grandmamma to keep perpetual Lent;
For she would take me on conditions cheap,
For what we scarcely could a parrot keep:
A trifle added to the daily fare
Would feed a maiden who must learn to spare.

With grandmamma I lived in perfect ease;
Consent to starve, and I was sure to please.
Full well I knew the painful shifts we made
Expenses all to lessen or evade,
And tradesmen's flinty hearts to soften and persuade.

Poor grandmamma among the gentry dwelt
Of a small town, and all the honour felt;

Shrinking from all approaches to disgrace
That might be mark'd in so genteel a place;
Where every daily deed, as soon as done,
Ran through the town as fast as it could run:—
At dinners what appear'd—at cards who lost or won.

Our good appearance through the town was known,
Hunger and thirst were matters of our own;
And you would judge that she in scandal dealt
Who told on what we fed, or how we felt.

We had a little maid, some four feet high,
Who was employ'd our household stores to buy;
For she would weary every man in trade,
And tease t' assent whom she could not persuade.

Methinks I see her, with her pigmy light,
Precede her mistress in a moonless night;
From the small lantern throwing through the street
The dimm'd effulgence at her lady's feet;
What time she went to prove her well-known skill
With rival friends at their beloved quadrille.

"And how's your pain?" inquired the gentle maid,
For that was asking if with luck she play'd;

And this she answer'd as the cards decreed,
" O Biddy! ask not—very bad indeed;"
Or, in more cheerful tone, from spirit light,
" Why, thank you, Biddy, pretty well to-night."

The good old lady often thought me vain,
And of my dress would tenderly complain;
But liked my taste in food of every kind,
As from all grossness, like her own, refined:
Yet when she hinted that on herbs and bread
Girls of my age and spirit should be fed,
Whate'er my age had borne, my flesh and blood,
Spirit and strength, the interdict withstood;
But though I might the frugal soul offend
Of the good matron, now my only friend,
And though her purse suggested rules so strict,
Her love could not the punishment inflict:
She sometimes watch'd the morsel with a frown,
And sigh'd to see, but let it still go down.

Our butcher's bill, to me a monstrous sum,
Was such, that summon'd, he forbore to come:
Proud man was he, and when the bill was paid,
He put the money in his bag and play'd,
Jerking it up, and catching it again,
And poising in his hand in pure disdain;

While the good lady, awed by man so proud,
And yet disposed to have her claims allow'd,
Balanced between humility and pride,
Stood a fall'n empress at the butcher's side,
Praising his meat as delicate and nice——
"Yes, madam, yes! if people pay the price."

So lived the lady, and so murmur'd I,
In all the grief of pride and poverty:
Twice in the year there came a note to tell
How well mamma, who hoped the child was well;
It was not then a pleasure to be styled,
By a mamma of such experience, Child!
But I suppress'd the feelings of my pride,
Or other feelings set them all aside.

There was a youth from college, just the one
I judged mamma would value as a son;
He was to me good, handsome, learn'd, genteel,
I cannot now what then I thought reveal;
But, in a word, he was the very youth
Who told me what I judged the very truth,
That love like his and charms like mine agreed,
For all description they must both exceed:
Yet scarcely can I throw a smile on things
So painful, but that Time his comfort brings;

Or rather throws oblivion on the mind,
For we are more forgetful than resign'd.

We both were young, had heard of love and read,
And could see nothing in the thing to dread,
But like a simple pair our time employ'd
In pleasant views to be in time enjoy'd;
When Frederick came, the kind old lady smiled
To see the youth so taken with her child;
A nice young man, who came with unsoil'd feet
In her best room, and neither drank nor eat:
Alas! he planted in a vacant breast
The hopes and fears that robb'd it of its rest.

All now appear'd so right, so fair, so just,
We surely might the lovely prospect trust;
Alas! poor Frederick and his charmer found
That they were standing on fallacious ground:
All that the father of the youth could do
Was done—and now he must himself pursue
Success in life; and, honest truth to state,
He was not fitted for a candidate:
I, too, had nothing in this world below,
Save what a Scotch physician could bestow,
Who for a pittance took my mother's hand,
And if disposed, what had they to command?

But these were after fears, nor came t' annoy
The tender children in their dreams of joy;
Who talk'd of glebe and garden, tithe and rent,
And how a fancied income should be spent;
What friends, what social parties we should see,
And live with what genteel economy;
In fact, we gave our hearts as children give,
And thought of living as our neighbours live.

Now when assured ourselves that all was well,
'Twas right our friends of these designs to tell;
For this we parted.—Grandmamma, amazed,
Upon her child with fond compassion gazed;
Then pious tears appear'd, but not a word
In aid of weeping till she cried, "Good Lord!"
She then, with hurried motion, sought the stairs,
And calling Biddy, bade her come to prayers.

Yet the good lady early in her life
Was call'd to vow the duties of a wife;
She sought the altar by her friends' advice,
No free-will offering, but a sacrifice:
But here a forward girl and eager boy
Dared talk of life, and turn their heads with joy.

To my mamma I wrote in just the way
I felt, and said what dreaming lasses say;
How handsome Frederick was, by all confess'd,
How well he look'd, how very well he dress'd;
With learning much, that would for both provide,
His mother's darling, and his father's pride;
And then he loves me more than mind can guess,
Than heart conceive, or eloquence express.

No letter came a doubtful mind to ease,
And, what was worse, no Frederick came to please;
To college gone—so thought our little maid—
But not to see me! I was much afraid;
I walk'd the garden round, and deeply sigh'd,
When grandmamma grew faint! and dropt, and died:
A fate so awful and so sudden drove
All else away, and half extinguish'd love.

Strange people came; they search'd the house around,
And, vulgar wretches! sold whate'er they found:
The secret hoards that in the drawers were kept,
The silver toys that with the tokens slept,
The precious beads, the corals with their bells,
That laid secure, lock'd up in secret cells,
The costly silk, the tabby, the brocade,
The very garment for the wedding made,

Were brought to sale, with many a jest thereon!
" Going—a bridal dress—for——Going!—Gone."
That ring, dear pledge of early love and true,
That to the wedded finger almost grew,
Was sold for six and ten-pence to a Jew!

Great was the fancied worth; but ah! how small
The sum thus made, and yet how valued all!
But all that to the shameful service went,
Just paid the bills, the burial, and the rent;
And I and Biddy, poor deserted maids!
Were turn'd adrift to seek for other aids.

Now left by all the world, as I believed,
I wonder'd much that I so little grieved;
Yet I was frighten'd at the painful view
Of shiftless want, and saw not what to do:
In times like this the poor have little dread,
They can but work, and they shall then be fed;
And Biddy cheer'd me with such thoughts as this,
" You'll find the poor have their enjoyments, Miss!"
Indeed I saw, for Biddy took me home
To a forsaken hovel's cold and gloom;
And while my tears in plenteous flow were shed,
With her own hands she placed her proper bed,

Reserved for need—A fire was quickly made,
And food, the purchase for the day, display'd:
She let in air to make the damps retire,
Then placed her sad companion at her fire;
She then began her wonted peace to feel,
She bought her wool, and sought her favourite wheel,
That as she turn'd, she sang with sober glee,
"Begone, dull Care! I'll have no more with thee;"
Then turn'd to me, and bade me weep no more,
But try and taste the pleasures of the poor.

When dinner came, on table brown and bare
Were placed the humblest forms of earthen ware,
With one blue dish, on which our food was placed,
For appetite provided, not for taste:
I look'd disgusted, having lately seen
All so minutely delicate and clean;
Yet, as I sate, I found to my surprise
A vulgar kind of inclination rise,
And near my humble friend, and nearer drew,
Tried the strange food, and was partaker too.

I walk'd at eve, but not where I was seen,
And thought, with sorrow, what can Frederick mean?
I must not write, I said, for I am poor;
And then I wept till I could weep no more.

Kind-hearted Biddy tried my griefs to heal,
" This is a nothing to what others feel;
" Life has a thousand sorrows worse than this,
" A lover lost is not a fortune, Miss!
" One goes, another comes, and which is best
" There is no telling—set your heart at rest."

At night we pray'd—I dare not say a word
Of our devotion, it was so absurd;
And very pious upon Biddy's part,
But mine were all effusions of the heart;
While she her angels call'd their peace to shed,
And bless the corners of our little bed.
All was a dream! I said, is this indeed
To be my life? and thus to lodge and feed,
To pay for what I have, and work for what I need?
Must I be poor? and Frederick, if we meet,
Would not so much as know me in the street?
Or, as he walk'd with ladies, he would try
To be engaged as we were passing by—
And then I wept to think that I should grow
Like them whom he would be ashamed to know.

On the third day, while striving with my fate,
And hearing Biddy all its comforts state,

Talking of all her neighbours, all her schemes,
Her stories, merry jests, and warning dreams;
With tales of mirth and murder! O! the nights
Past, said the maiden, in such dear delights,
And I was thinking, can the time arrive
When I shall thus be humbled, and survive?—
Then I beheld a horse and handsome gig,
With the good air, tall form, and comely wig
Of Doctor Mackey—I in fear began
To say, Good heaven, preserve me from the man!
But fears ill reason,—heaven to such a mind
Had lent a heart compassionate and kind.

From him I learnt that one had call'd to know
What with my hand my parents could bestow;
And when he learn'd the truth, in high disdain
He told my fate, and home return'd again.

" Nay, be not grieved, my lovely girl; but few
" Wed the first love, however kind and true;
" Something there comes to break the strongest vow,
" Or mine had been my gentle Mattie now.
" When the good lady died—but let me leave
" All gloomy subjects—'tis not good to grieve."

Thus the kind Scotchman soothed me: he sustain'd
A father's part, and my submission gain'd:
Then my affection; and he often told
My sterner parent that her heart was cold:
He grew in honour—he obtain'd a name—
And now a favourite with the place became:
To me most gentle, he would condescend
To read and reason, be the guide and friend;
He taught me knowledge of the wholesome kind,
And fill'd with many a useful truth my mind:
Life's common burden daily lighter grew;
And even Frederick lessen'd in my view:
Cold and repulsive as he once appear'd,
He was by every generous act endear'd;
And, above all, that he with ardour fill'd
My soul for truth—a love by him instill'd;
Till my mamma grew jealous of a maid
To whom an husband such attention paid:
Not grossly jealous; but it gave her pain,
And she observed, "He made her daughter vain;
"And what his help to one who must not look
"To gain her bread by poring on a book?"

This was distress; but this, and all beside,
Was lost in grief—my kinder parent died,

When praised and loved, when joy and health he gave,
He sank lamented to an early grave:
Then love and woe—the parent and the child,
Lost in one grief, allied and reconciled.

Yet soon a will, that left me half his worth,
To the same spirit gave a second birth:
But 'twas a mother's spleen; and she indeed
Was sick, and sad, and had of comfort need;
I watch'd the way her anxious spirit took,
And often found her musing o'er a book;
She changed her dress, her church, her priest, her prayer,
Join'd a new sect, and sought her comforts there;
Some strange coarse people came, and were so free
In their addresses, they offended me;
But my mamma threw all her pride away—
More humble she as more assuming they.

"And what," they said, as having power, "are now
"The inward conflicts? do you strive? and how?"
Themselves confessing thoughts so new and wild,
I thought them like the visions of a child.
"Could we," they ask, "our best good deeds condemn?
"And did we long to touch the garment's hem?
"And was it so with us? for so it was with them.'

A younger few assumed a softer part,
And tried to shake the fortress of my heart;
To this my pliant mother lent her aid,
And wish'd the winning of her erring maid:
I was constrain'd her female friends to hear;
But suffer'd not a bearded convert near:
Though more than one attempted, with their whine,
And "Sister! sister! how that heart of thine?"
But this was freedom I for ever check'd:
Mine was a heart no brother could affect.

But, "would I hear the preacher, and receive
"The dropping dew of his discourse at eve?
"The soft, sweet words?" I gave two precious hours
To hear of gifts and graces, helps and powers;
When a pale youth, who should dismiss the flock,
Gave to my bosom an electric shock.
While in that act he look'd upon my face
As one in that all-equalizing place:
Nor, though he sought me, would he lay aside
Their cold, dead freedom, or their dull, sad pride.

Of his conversion he with triumph spoke,
Before he orders from a bishop took:

Then how his father's anger he had braved;
And, safe himself, his erring neighbours saved.
Me he rejoiced a sister to behold
Among the members of his favourite fold;
He had not sought me, the availing call
Demanded all his love, and had it all;
But, now thus met, it must be heaven's design.
Indeed! I thought, it never shall be mine;
Yes, we must wed. He was not rich: and I
Had of the earthly good a mean supply;
But it sufficed. Of his conversion then
He told, and labours in converting men;
For he was chosen all their bands among—
Another Daniel! honour'd, though so young.

He call'd me sister: show'd me that he knew
What I possess'd; and told what it would do;
My looks, I judge, express'd my full disdain;
But it was given to the man in vain:
They preach till they are proud, and pride disturbs the brain.

Is this the youth once timid, mild, polite?
How odious now, and sick'ning to the sight!
Proud that he sees, and yet so truly blind,
With all this blight and mildew on the mind!

Amazed, the solemn creature heard me vow
That I was not disposed to take him now.

"Then, art thou changed, fair maiden? changed thy heart?"
I answer'd, "No; but I perceive thou art."

Still was my mother sad, her nerves relax'd,
And our small income for advice was tax'd;
When I, who long'd for change and freedom, cried,
Let sea and Sidmouth's balmy air be tried;
And so they were, and every neighbouring scene,
That make the bosom, like the clime, serene;
Yet were her teachers loth to yield assent;
And not without the warning voice we went;
And there was secret counsel all unknown
To me—but I had counsel of my own.

And now there pass'd a portion of my time
In ease delicious, and in joy sublime—
With friends endear'd by kindness—with delight,—
In all that could the feeling mind excite,
Or please, excited; walks in every place
Where we could pleasure find and beauty trace,
Or views at night, where on the rocky steep
Shines the full moon, or glitters on the deep.

Yes, they were happy days; but they are fled!
All now are parted—part are with the dead!
Still it is pleasure, though 'tis mix'd with pain,
To think of joys that cannot live again!
Here cannot live; but they excite desire
Of purer kind, and heavenly thoughts inspire!

And now my mother, weaken'd in her mind,
Her will, subdued before, to me resign'd.
Wean'd from her late directors, by degrees
She sank resign'd, and only sought for ease:
In a small town upon the coast we fix'd;
Nor in amusement with associates mix'd.
My years—but other mode will I pursue,
And count my time by what I sought to do.

And was that mind at ease? could I avow
That no once leading thoughts engaged me now?
Was I convinced th' enthusiastic man
Had ruin'd what the loving boy began?

I answer doubting—I could still detect
Feelings too soft—yet him I could reject—
Feelings that came when I had least employ,
When common pleasures I could least enjoy—

When I was pacing lonely in the rays
Of a full moon, in lonely walks and ways—
When I was sighing o'er a tale's distress,
And paid attention to my Bible less.

These found, I sought my remedies for these;
I suffer'd common things my mind to please,
And common pleasures: seldom walk'd alone,
Nor when the moon upon the waters shone;
But then my candles lit, my window closed,
My needle took, and with my neighbours prosed:
And in one year—nay, ere the end of one,
My labour ended, and my love was done.

My heart at rest, I boldly look'd within,
And dared to ask it of its secret sin;
Alas! with pride it answer'd, "Look around,
"And tell me where a better heart is found."
And then I traced my virtues: O! how few,
In fact, they were, and yet how vain I grew;
Thought of my kindness, condescension, ease,
My will, my wishes, nay, my power to please;
I judged me prudent, rational, discreet,
And void of folly, falsehood, and deceit;
I read, not lightly, as I some had known,
But made an author's meaning all my own;

In short, what lady could a poet choose
As a superior subject for his muse?

So said my heart; and Conscience straight replied—
"I say the matter is not fairly tried:
"I am offended, hurt, dissatisfied;
"First of the Christian graces, let me see
"What thy pretensions to humility?
"Art thou prepared for trial? Wilt thou say
"I am this being, and for judgment pray?
"And with the gallant Frenchman, wilt thou cry,
"When to thy judge presented, thus am I—
"Thus was I form'd—these talents I possess'd—
"So I employ'd them—and thou know'st the rest?"

Thus Conscience; and she then a picture drew,
And bade me think and tremble at the view.
One I beheld—a wife, a mother—go
To gloomy scenes of wickedness and woe;
She sought her way through all things vile and base,
And made a prison a religious place:
Fighting her way—the way that angels fight
With powers of darkness—to let in the light;
Tell me, my heart, hast thou such victory won
As this, a sinner of thy sex, has done,

And calls herself a sinner? What art thou?
And where thy praise and exaltation now?
Yet is she tender, delicate, and nice,
And shrinks from all depravity and vice;
Shrinks from the ruffian gaze, the savage gloom,
That reign where guilt and misery find a home:
Guilt chain'd, and misery purchased; and with them
All we abhor, abominate, condemn—
The look of scorn, the scowl, th' insulting leer
Of shame, all fix'd on her who ventures here:
Yet all she braved! she kept her stedfast eye
On the dear cause, and brush'd the baseness by.
So would a mother press her darling child
Close to her breast, with tainted rags defiled.

But thou hast talents truly! say the ten:
Come, let us look at their improvement then.
What hast thou done to aid thy suffering kind,
To help the sick, the deaf, the lame, the blind?
Hast thou not spent thy intellectual force
On books abstruse, in critical discourse?
Wasting in useless energy thy days,
And idly listening to their common praise,
Who can a kind of transient fame dispense,
And say—"a woman of exceeding sense."

Thus tried, and failing, the suggestions fled,
And a corrected spirit reign'd instead.

My mother yet was living; but the flame
Of life now flash'd, and fainter then became;
I made it pleasant, and was pleased to see
A parent looking as a child to me.

And now our humble place grew wond'rous gay;
Came gallant persons in their red array:
All strangers welcome there, extremely welcome they.

When in the church I saw inquiring eyes
Fix'd on my face with pleasure and surprise;
And soon a knocking at my door was heard;
And soon the lover of my youth appear'd—
Frederick, in all his glory, glad to meet,
And say, "his happiness was now complete."

He told his flight from superstitious zeal;
But first what torments he was doom'd to feel:—
"The tender tears he saw from women fall—
"The strong persuasions of the brethren all—
"The threats of crazed enthusiasts, bound to keep
"The struggling mind, and awe the straying sheep—

" From these, their love, their curses, and their creed,
" Was I by reason and exertion freed."

Then, like a man who often had been told
And was convinced success attends the bold,
His former purpose he renew'd, and swore
He never loved me half so well before:
Before he felt a something to divide
The heart, that now had not a love beside.

In earlier times had I myself amused,
And first my swain perplex'd, and then refused;—
Cure for conceit;—but now in purpose grave,
Strong and decisive the reply I gave.
Still he would come, and talk as idlers do,
Both of his old associates and his new;
Those who their dreams and reveries receive
For facts, and those who would not facts believe.

He now conceived that truth was hidden, placed
He knew not where, she never could be traced;
" But that in every place, the world around,
" Might some resemblance of the nymph be found:
" Yet wise men knew these shadows to be vain,
" Such as our true philosophers disdain,—

"They laugh to see what vulgar minds pursue—
"Truth, as a mistress, never in their view—
"But there the shadow flies, and that, they cry, is true."

Thus, at the college and the meeting train'd,
My lover seem'd his acmè to have gain'd;
With some compassion I essay'd a cure:
"If truth be hidden, why art thou so sure?"
This he mistook for tenderness, and cried,
"If sure of thee, I care not what beside!"
Compell'd to silence, I, in pure disdain,
Withdrew from one so insolent and vain;
He then retired; and I was kindly told,
"In pure compassion grew estranged and cold."

My mother died; but, in my grief, drew near
A bosom friend, who dried the useless tear;
We lived together: we combined our shares
Of the world's good, and learn'd to brave its cares:
We were the ladies of the place, and found
Protection and respect the country round;
We gave, and largely, for we wish'd to live
In good repute—for this 'tis good to give;
Our annual present to the priest convey'd
Was kindly taken:—we in comfort pray'd;

There none molested in the crimson pew
The worthy ladies, whom the vicar knew:
And we began to think that life might be,
Not happy all, but innocently free.

My friend in early life was bound to one
Of gentle kindred, but a younger son.
He fortune's smile with perseverance woo'd,
And wealth beneath the burning sun pursued:
There, urged by love and youthful hope, he went,
Loth; but 'twas all his fortune could present.

From hence he wrote; and, with a lover's fears,
And gloomy fondness, talk'd of future years;
To her devoted, his Priscilla found
His faithful heart still suffering with its wound,
That would not heal. A second time she heard;
And then no more: nor lover since appear'd;
Year after year the country's fleet arrived,
Confirm'd her fear, and yet her love survived;
It still was living; yet her hope was dead,
And youthful dreams, nay, youth itself, was fled;
And he was lost: so urged her friends, so she
At length believed, and thus retired with me;
She would a dedicated vestal prove,
And give her virgin vows to heaven and love;

She dwelt with fond regret on pleasures past,
With ardent hope on those that ever last;
Pious and tender, every day she view'd
With solemn joy our perfect solitude;
Her reading, that which most delighted her,
That soothed the passions, yet would gently stir;
The tender, softening, melancholy strain,
That caused not pleasure, but that vanquish'd pain,
In tears she read, and wept, and long'd to read again.
But other worlds were her supreme delight,
And there, it seem'd, she long'd to take her flight:
Yet patient, pensive, arm'd by thoughts sublime,
She watch'd the tardy steps of lingering time.

My friend, with face that most would handsome call,
Possess'd the charm that wins the heart of all;
And, thrice entreated by a lover's prayer,
She thrice refused him with determined air.

"No! had the world one monarch, and was he
"All that the heart could wish its lord to be,—
"Lovely and loving, generous, brave, and true,—
"Vain were his hopes to waken hers anew!"
For she was wedded to ideal views,
And fancy's prospects, that she would not lose,

Would not forego to be a mortal's wife,
And wed the poor realities of life.

There was a day, ere yet the autumn closed,
When, ere her wintry wars, the earth reposed,
When from the yellow weed the feathery crown,
Light as the curling smoke, fell slowly down;
When the wing'd insect settled in our sight,
And waited wind to recommence her flight;
When the wide river was a silver sheet,
And on the ocean slept th' unanchor'd fleet;
When from our garden, as we look'd above,
There was no cloud, and nothing seem'd to move;
Then was my friend in ecstasies—she cried,
" There is, I feel there is, a world beside!
" Martha, dear Martha! we shall hear not then
" Of hearts distress'd by good or evil men,
" But all will constant, tender, faithful be—
" So had I been, and so had one with me;
" But in this world the fondest and the best
" Are the most tried, most troubled, and distress'd:
" This is the place for trial, here we prove,
" And there enjoy, the faithfulness of love.

" Nay, were he here in all the pride of youth,
" With honour, valour, tenderness, and truth,

" Entirely mine, yet what could I secure,
" Or who one day of comfort could insure?

" No! all is closed on earth, and there is now
" Nothing to break th' indissoluble vow;
" But in that world will be th' abiding bliss,
" That pays for every tear and sigh in this."

Such her discourse, and more refined it grew,
Till she had all her glorious dream in view;
And she would further in that dream proceed
Than I dare go, who doubtfully agreed:
Smiling I ask'd, again to draw the soul
From flight so high, and fancy to control,
" If this be truth, the lover's happier way
" Is distant still to keep the purposed day;
" The real bliss would mar the fancied joy,
" And marriage all the dream of love destroy."

She softly smiled, and as we gravely talk'd,
We saw a man who up the gravel walk'd,
Not quite erect, nor quite by age depress'd,
A travell'd man, and as a merchant dress'd;
Large chain of gold upon his watch he wore,
Small golden buckles on his feet he bore;

A head of gold his costly cane display'd,
And all about him love of gold betray'd.

This comely man moved onward, and a pair
Of comely maidens met with serious air;
Till one exclaim'd, and wildly look'd around,
" O heav'n, 'tis Paul!" and dropt upon the ground;
But she recover'd soon, and you must guess
What then ensued, and how much happiness.

They parted lovers, both distress'd to part!
They met as neighbours, heal'd, and whole of heart:
She in his absence look'd to heaven for bliss,
He was contented with a world like this;
And she prepared in some new state to meet
The man now seeking for some snug retreat.
He kindly told her he was firm and true,
Nor doubted her, and bade her then adieu!

" What shall I do?" the sighing maid began,
" How lost the lover! O, how gross the man."

For the plain dealer had his wish declared,
Nor she, devoted victim! could be spared:
He spoke as one decided; she as one
Who fear'd the love, and would the lover shun.

" O Martha, sister of my soul! how dies
" Each lovely view! for can I truth disguise,
" That this is he? No! nothing shall persuade;
" This is a man the naughty world has made,
" An eating, drinking, buying, bargaining man—
" And can I love him? No! I never can.
" What once he was, what fancy gave beside,
" Full well I know, my love was then my pride;
" What time has done, what trade and travel wrought,
" You see! and yet your sorrowing friend is sought;
" But can I take him?"—" Take him not," I cried,
" If so averse—but why so soon decide?"

Meantime a daily guest the man appear'd,
Set all his sail, and for his purpose steer'd;
Loud and familiar, loving, fierce and free,
He overpower'd her soft timidity;
Who, weak and vain, and grateful to behold
The man was hers, and hers would be the gold;
Thus sundry motives, more than I can name,
Leagued on his part, and she a wife became.

A home was offer'd, but I knew too well
What comfort was with married friends to dwell;
I was resign'd, and had I felt distress,
Again a lover offer'd some redress;

Behold, a hero of the buskin hears
My loss, and with consoling love appears;
Frederick was now a hero on the stage,
In all its glories, rhapsody, and rage;
Again himself he offer'd, offer'd all
That his an hero of the kind can call:
He for my sake would hope of fame resign,
And leave the applause of all the world for mine.
Hard fate was Frederick's, never to succeed,
Yet ever try—but so it was decreed:
His mind was weaken'd; he would laugh and weep,
And swore profusely I had murder'd sleep,
Had quite unmann'd him, cleft his heart in twain,
And he should never be himself again.

He *was* himself; weak, nervous, kind, and poor,
Ill dress'd and idle, he besieged my door,
Borrow'd,—or, worse, made verses on my charms,
And did his best to fill me with alarms;
I had some pity, and I sought the price
Of my repose—my hero was not nice;
There was a loan, and promise I should be
From all the efforts of his fondness free,
From hunger's future claims, or those of vanity.
"Yet," said he, bowing, "do to study take!
"O! what a Desdemona wouldst thou make!"

Thus was my lover lost; yet even now
He claims one thought, and this we will allow.

His father lived to an extreme old age,
But never kind!—his son had left the stage,
And gain'd some office, but an humble place,
And that he lost! Want sharpen'd his disgrace,
Urged him to seek his father—but too late,
His jealous brothers watch'd and barr'd the gate.

The old man died; but there is one who pays
A moderate pension for his latter days,
Who, though assured inquiries will offend,
Is ever asking for this unknown friend;
Some partial lady, whom he hopes to find
As to his wants so to his wishes kind.

"Be still," a cool adviser sometimes writes—
"Nay, but," says he, "the gentle maid invites—
"Do, let me know the young! the soft! the fair!"

"Old man," 'tis answer'd, "take thyself to prayer!
"Be clean, be sober, to thy priest apply,
"And—dead to all around thee—learn to die!"

Now had I rest from life's strong hopes and fears,
And no disturbance mark'd the flying years;
So on in quiet might those years have past,
But for a light adventure, and a last.

A handsome boy, from school-day bondage free,
Came with mamma to gaze upon the sea;
With soft blue eye he look'd upon the waves,
And talk'd of treacherous rocks, and seamen's graves:
There was much sweetness in his boyish smile,
And signs of feelings frank, that knew not guile.

The partial mother, of her darling proud,
Besought my friendship, and her own avow'd;
She praised her Rupert's person, spirit, ease,
How fond of study, yet how form'd to please;
In our discourse he often bore a part,
And talk'd, heaven bless him, of his feeling heart;
He spoke of pleasures souls like his enjoy,
And hated Lovelace like a virtuous boy;
He felt for Clementina's holy strife,
And was Sir Charles as large and true as life:
For Virtue's heroines was his soul distress'd;
True love and guileless honour fill'd his breast,

When, as the subjects drew the frequent sigh,
The tear stood trembling in his large blue eye,
And softly he exclaim'd, "Sweet, sweetest sympathy!"

When thus I heard the handsome stripling speak,
I smiled assent, and thought to pat his cheek;
But when I saw the feelings blushing there,
Signs of emotions strong, they said—forbear!

The youth would speak of his intent to live
On that estate which heaven was pleased to give,
There with the partner of his joys to dwell,
And nurse the virtues that he loved so well;
The humble good of happy swains to share,
And from the cottage drive distress and care;
To the dear infants make some pleasures known,
And teach, he gravely said, the virtues to his own.

He loved to read in verse, and verse-like prose,
The softest tales of love-inflicted woes;
When, looking fondly, he would smile and cry,
"Is there not bliss in sensibility?"

We walk'd together, and it seem'd not harm
In linking thought with thought, and arm with arm,

Till the dear boy would talk too much of bliss,
And indistinctly murmur—"such as this."

When no maternal wish her heart beguiled,
The lady call'd her son "the darling child;"
When with some nearer view her speech began,
She changed her phrase, and said, "the good young man!"
And lost, when hinting of some future bride,
The woman's prudence in the mother's pride.

Still decent fear and conscious folly strove
With fond presumption and aspiring love;
But now too plain to me the strife appear'd,
And what he sought I knew, and what he fear'd;
The trembling hand and frequent sigh disclosed
The wish that prudence, care, and time opposed.

Was I not pleased, will you demand?—Amused
By boyish love, that woman's pride refused?
This I acknowledge, and from day to day
Resolved no longer at such game to play;
Yet I forbore, though to my purpose true,
And firmly fix'd to bid the youth adieu.

There was a moonlight eve, serenely cool,
When the vast ocean seem'd a mighty pool;
Save the small rippling waves that gently beat,
We scarcely heard them falling, at our feet:
His mother absent, absent every sound
And every sight that could the youth confound;
The arm, fast lock'd in mine, his fear betray'd,
And when he spoke not, his designs convey'd;
He oft-times gasp'd for breath, he tried to speak,
And studying words, at last had words to seek.

Silent the boy, by silence more betray'd,
And fearing lest he should appear afraid,
He knelt abruptly, and his speech began—
" Pity the pangs of an unhappy man."

" Be sure," I answer'd, " and relieve them too—
" But why that posture? What the woes to you?
" To feel for others' sorrows is humane,
" But too much feeling is our virtue's bane.

" Come, my dear Rupert! now your tale disclose,
" That I may know the sufferer and his woes,
" Know there is pain that wilful man endures,
" That our reproof and not our pity cures;

" For though for such assumed distress we grieve,
" Since they themselves as well as us deceive,
" Yet we assist not."——The unhappy youth,
Unhappy then, beheld not all the truth.

" O! what is this?" exclaim'd the dubious boy,
" Words that confuse the being they destroy?
" So have I read the gods to madness drive
" The man condemn'd with adverse fate to strive;
" O! make thy victim though by misery sure,
" And let me know the pangs I must endure;
" For, like the Grecian warrior, I can pray
" Falling, to perish in the face of day."

" Pretty, my Rupert; and it proves the use
" Of all that learning which the schools produce:
" But come, your arm—no trembling, but attend
" To sober truth, and a maternal friend.

" You ask for pity?"—" O! indeed I do."
" Well then, you have it, and assistance too:
" Suppose us married!"—" O! the heavenly thought!"
" Nay—nay, my friend, be you by wisdom taught;
" For wisdom tells you, love would soon subside,
" Fall, and make room for penitence and pride;

" Then would you meet the public eye, and blame
" Your private taste, and be o'erwhelm'd with shame:
" How must it then your bosom's peace destroy
" To hear it said, 'The mother and her boy!'
" And then to show the sneering world it lies,
" You would assume the man, and tyrannize;
" Ev'n Time, Care's general soother, would augment
" Your self-reproaching, growing discontent.

" Add twenty years to my precarious life,
" And lo! your aged, feeble, wailing wife;
" Displeased, displeasing, discontented, blamed;
" Both, and with cause, ashaming and ashamed:
" When I shall bend beneath a press of time,
" Thou wilt be all erect in manhood's prime;
" Then wilt thou fly to younger minds t' assuage
" Thy bosom's pain, and I in jealous age
" Shall move contempt, if still; if active, rage:
" And though in anguish all my days are past,
" Yet far beyond thy wishes they may last;
" May last till thou, thy better prospects fled,
" Shall have no comfort when thy wife is dead.

" Then thou in turn, though none will call thee old,
" Will feel thy spirit fled, thy bosom cold;

" No strong or eager wish to wake the will,
" Life will appear to stagnate and be still,
" As now with me it slumbers; O! rejoice
" That I attend not to that pleading voice;
" So will new hopes this troubled dream succeed,
" And one will gladly hear my Rupert plead."

Ask you, while thus I could the youth deny
Was I unmoved?—Inexorable I,
Fix'd and determined: thrice he made his prayer,
With looks of sadness first, and then despair;
Thrice doom'd to bear refusal, not exempt,
At the last effort, from a slight contempt.

Did his distress, his pains, your joy excite?—
No; but I fear'd his perseverance might.
Was there no danger in the moon's soft rays,
To hear the handsome stripling's earnest praise?
Was there no fear that while my words reproved
The eager youth, I might myself be moved?
Not for his sake alone I cried persist
No more, and with a frown the cause dismiss'd.

Seek you th' event?—I scarcely need reply,
Love, unreturn'd, will languish, pine, and die:

We lived awhile in friendship, and with joy
I saw depart in peace the amorous boy.

We met some ten years after, and he then
Was married, and as cool as married men;
He talk'd of war and taxes, trade and farms,
And thought no more of me, or of my charms.

We spoke; and when, alluding to the past,
Something of meaning in my look I cast,
He, who could never thought or wish disguise,
Look'd in my face with trouble and surprise;
To kill reserve, I seized his arm, and cried,
"Know me, my lord!" when laughing, he replied,
Wonder'd again, and look'd upon my face,
And seem'd unwilling marks of time to trace;
But soon I brought him fairly to confess,
That boys in love judge ill of happiness.

Love had his day—to graver subjects led,
My will is govern'd, and my mind is fed;
And to more vacant bosoms I resign
The hopes and fears that once affected mine.

TALES OF THE HALL.

BOOK XII.

The Rector at the Hall—Why absent—He relates the Story of Sir Owen—His Marriage—Death of his Lady—His Mind acquires new Energy—His Passions awake—His Taste and Sensibility—Admires a Lady—Camilla—Her Purpose—Sir Owen's Disappointment—His Spirit of Revenge—How gratified—The Dilemma of Love—An Example of Forgiveness—Its Effect.

TALES OF THE HALL.

BOOK XII.

SIR OWEN DALE.

AGAIN the Brothers saw their friend the Priest,
Who shared the comforts he so much increased;
Absent of late—and thus the Squire address'd,
With welcome smile, his ancient friend and guest.

"What has detain'd thee? some parochial case?
"Some man's desertion, or some maid's disgrace?
"Or wert thou call'd, as parish priest, to give
"Name to a new-born thing that would not live,
"That its weak glance upon the world had thrown,
"And shrank in terror from the prospect shown?
"Or hast thou heard some dying wretch deplore,
"That of his pleasures he could taste no more?

" Who wish'd thy aid his spirits to sustain,
" And drive away the fears that gave him pain?
" For priests are thought to have a patent charm
" To ease the dying sinner of alarm:
" Or was thy business of the carnal sort,
" And thou wert gone a patron's smile to court,
" And Croft or Creswell would'st to Binning add,
" Or take, kind soul! whatever could be had?
" Once more I guess: th' election now is near;
" My friend, perhaps, is sway'd, by hope or fear,
" And all a patriot's wishes, forth to ride,
" And hunt for votes to prop the fav'rite side?"

" More private duty called me hence, to pay
" My friends respect on a rejoicing day,"
Replied the Rector: " there is born a son,
" Pride of an ancient race, who pray'd for one,
" And long desponded. Would you hear the tale—
" Ask, and 'tis granted—of Sir Owen Dale?"

" Grant," said the Brothers, " for we humbly ask;
" Ours be the gratitude, and thine the task:
" Yet dine we first: then to this tale of thine,
" As to thy sermon, seriously incline:
" In neither case our rector shall complain,
" Of this recited, that composed in vain.

" Something we heard of vengeance, who appall'd,
" Like an infernal spirit, him who call'd;
" And, ere he vanish'd, would perform his part,
" Inflicting tortures on the wounded heart;
" Of this but little from report we know:
" If you the progress of revenge can show,
" Give it, and all its horrors, if you please,
" We hear our neighbour's sufferings much at ease.

" Is it not so? For do not men delight—
" We call them men—our bruisers to excite,
" And urge with bribing gold, and feed them for the fight?
" Men beyond common strength, of giant size,
" And threat'ning terrors in each other's eyes;
" When in their naked, native force display'd,
" Look answers look, affrighting and afraid;
" While skill, like spurs and feeding, gives the arm
" The wicked power to do the greater harm:
" Maim'd in the strife, the falling man sustains
" Th' insulting shout, that aggravates his pains:—
" Man can bear this; and shall thy hearers heed
" A tale of human sufferings? Come! proceed."

Thus urged, the worthy Rector thought it meet
Some moral truth, as preface, to repeat;

Reflection serious,—common-place, 'tis true,—
But he would act as he was wont to do,
And bring his morals in his neighbour's view.

"O! how the passions, insolent and strong,
"Bear our weak minds their rapid course along;
"Make us the madness of their will obey;
"Then die, and leave us to our griefs a prey!"

Sir Owen Dale his fortieth year had seen,
With temper placid, and with mind serene;
Rich; early married to an easy wife,
They led in comfort a domestic life:
He took of his affairs a prudent care,
And was by early habit led to spare;
Not as a miser, but in pure good taste,
That scorn'd the idle wantonness of waste.

In fact, the lessons he from prudence took
Were written in his mind, as in a book:
There what to do he read, and what to shun;
And all commanded was with promptness done:
He seem'd without a passion to proceed,
Or one whose passions no correction need;

Yet some believed those passions only slept,
And were in bounds by early habits kept:
Curb'd as they were by fetters worn so long,
There were who judged them a rebellious throng.

To these he stood, not as a hero true,
Who fought his foes, and in the combat slew,
But one who all those foes, when sleeping, found,
And, unresisted, at his pleasure bound.

We thought—for I was one—that we espied
Some indications strong of dormant pride;
It was his wish in peace with all to live;
And he could pardon, but could not forgive:
Nay, there were times when stern defiance shook
The moral man, and threaten'd in his look.

Should these fierce passions—so we reason'd—break
Their long-worn chain, what ravage will they make!
In vain will prudence then contend with pride,
And reason vainly bid revenge subside;
Anger will not to meek persuasion bend,
Nor to the pleas of hope or fear attend:
What curb shall, then, in their disorder'd race,
Check the wild passions? what the calm replace?
Virtue shall strive in vain; and has he help in grace?

While yet the wife with pure discretion ruled,
The man was guided, and the mind was school'd;
But then that mind unaided ran to waste:
He had some learning, but he wanted taste:
Placid, not pleased—contented, not employ'd,—
He neither time improved, nor life enjoy'd.

That wife expired, and great the loss sustain'd,
Though much distress he neither felt nor feign'd;
He loved not warmly; but the sudden stroke
Deeply and strongly on his habits broke.

He had no child to soothe him, and his farm,
His sports, his speculations, lost their charm;
Then would he read and travel, would frequent
Life's busy scenes, and forth Sir Owen went:
The mind, that now was free, unfix'd, uncheck'd,
Read and observed with wonderful effect;
And still the more he gain'd, the more he long'd
To pay that mind his negligence had wrong'd;
He felt his pleasures rise as he improved;
And, first enduring, then the labour loved.

But, by the light let in, Sir Owen found
Some of those passions had their chain unbound;

As from a trance they rose to act their part,
And seize, as due to them, a feeling heart.

His very person now appear'd refined,
And took some graces from th' improving mind:
He grew polite without a fix'd intent,
And to the world a willing pupil went.

Restore him twenty years,—restore him ten,—
And bright had been his earthly prospect then;
But much refinement, when it late arrives,
May be the grace, not comfort, of our lives.

Now had Sir Owen feeling; things of late
Indifferent, he began to love or hate;
What once could neither good nor ill impart
Now pleased the senses, and now touch'd the heart;
Prospects and pictures struck th' awaken'd sight,
And each new object gave a new delight.

He, like th' imperfect creature who had shaped
A shroud to hide him, had at length escaped;
Changed from his grub-like state, to crawl no more,
But a wing'd being, pleased and form'd to soar.

Now, said his friends, while thus his views improve,
And his mind softens, what if he should love?

True; life with him has yet serene appear'd,
And therefore love in wisdom should be fear'd:
Forty and five his years, and then to sigh
For beauty's favour!—Son of frailty, fly!

Alas! he loved; it was our fear, but ours,
His friends alone. He doubted not his pow'rs
To win the prize, or to repel the charm,
To gain the battle, or escape the harm;
For he had never yet resistance proved,
Nor fear'd that friends should say—'Alas! he loved.'

Younger by twenty years, Camilla found
Her face unrivall'd when she smiled or frown'd:
Of all approved; in manner, form, and air,
Made to attract; gay, elegant, and fair:
She had, in beauty's aid, a fair pretence
To cultivated, strong intelligence;
For she a clear and ready mind had fed
With wholesome food; unhurt by what she read:
She loved to please; but, like her dangerous sex,
To please the more whom she design'd to vex.

This heard Sir Owen, and he saw it true;
It promised pleasure, promised danger too;
But this he knew not then, or slighted if he knew.

Yet he delay'd, and would by trials prove
That he was safe; would see the signs of love;
Would not address her while a fear remain'd;
But win his way, assured of what he gain'd.

This saw the lady, not displeased to find
A man at once so cautious and so blind:
She saw his hopes that she would kindly show
Proofs of her passion—then she his should know.

"So, when my heart is bleeding in his sight,
"His love acknowledged will the pains requite;
"It is, when conquer'd, he the heart regards;
"Well, good Sir Owen! let us play our cards."

He spake her praise in terms that love affords,
By words select, and looks surpassing words:
Kindly she listen'd, and in turn essay'd
To pay th' applauses—and she amply paid:
A beauty flattering!—beauteous flatterers feel
The ill you cause, when thus in praise you deal;
For surely he is more than man, or less,
When praised by lips that he would die to press,
And yet his senses undisturb'd can keep,
Can calmly reason, or can soundly sleep.

Not so Sir Owen; him Camilla praised,
And lofty hopes and strong emotions raised;
This had alone the strength of man subdued;
But this enchantress various arts pursued.

Let others pray for music—others pray'd
In vain:—Sir Owen ask'd, and was obey'd;
Let others, walking, sue that arm to take,
Unmoved she kept it for Sir Owen's sake;
Each small request she granted, and though small,
He thought them pledges of her granting all.

And now the lover, casting doubt aside,
Urged the fond suit that—could not be denied;
Joy more than reverence moved him when he said,
"Now banish all my fears, angelic maid!"
And as she paused for words, he gaily cried,
"I must not, cannot, will not be denied."

Ah! good Sir Owen, think not favours, such
As artful maids allow, amount to much;
The sweet, small, poison'd baits, that take the eye
And win the soul of all who venture nigh.

Camilla listen'd, paused, and look'd surprise,
Fair witch! exulting in her witcheries!

She turn'd aside her face, withdrew her hand,
And softly said, "Sir, let me understand."

"Nay, my dear lady! what can words explain,
"If all my looks and actions plead in vain?
"I love"—She show'd a cool respectful air,
And he began to falter in his prayer,
Yet urged her kindness—Kindness she confess'd,
It was esteem, she felt it, and express'd,
For her dear father's friend; and was it right
That friend of his—she thought of hers—to slight?

This to the wond'ring lover strange and new,
And false appear'd—he would not think it true:
Still he pursued the lovely prize, and still
Heard the cold words, design'd his hopes to kill;
He felt dismay'd, as he perceived success
Had inverse ratio, more obtaining less;
And still she grew more cool in her replies,
And talk'd of age and improprieties.

Then to his friends, although it hurt his pride,
And to the lady's, he for aid applied;
Who kindly woo'd for him, but strongly were denied.

And now it was those fiercer passions rose,
Urged by his love to murder his repose;
Shame shook his soul to be deceived so long,
And fierce Revenge for such contemptuous wrong;
Jealous he grew, and Jealousy supplied
His mind with rage, unsoothed, unsatisfied;
And grievous were the pangs of deeply wounded Pride.
His generous soul had not the grief sustain'd,
Had he not thought, 'Revenge may be obtain'd.'

Camilla grieved, but grief was now too late;
She hush'd her fears, and left th' event to fate;
Four years elapsed, nor knew Sir Owen yet
How to repay the meditated debt;
The lovely foe was in her thirtieth year,
Nor saw the favourite of the heart appear;
'Tis sure less sprightly the fair nymph became,
And spoke of former levities with shame:
But this, alas! was not in time confess'd,
And vengeance waited in Sir Owen's breast.

But now the time arrives—the maid must feel
And grieve for wounds that she refused to heal.
Sir Owen, childless, in his love had rear'd
A sister's son, and now the youth appear'd

In all the pride of manhood, and, beside,
With all a soldier's spirit and his pride:
Valiant and poor, with all that arms bestow,
And wants that captains in their quarters know;
Yet to his uncle's generous heart was due
The praise, that wants of any kind were few.

When he appear'd, Sir Owen felt a joy
Unknown before, his vengeance bless'd the boy—
" To him I dare confide a cause so just;
" Love him she may—O! could I say, she must."

Thus fix'd, he more than usual kindness show'd,
Nor let the Captain name the debt he owed;
But when he spoke of gratitude, exclaim'd,
" My dearest Morden! make me not ashamed;
" Each for a friend should do the best he can,
" The most obliged is the obliging man;
" But if you wish to give as well as take,
" You may a debtor of your uncle make."

Morden was earnest in his wish to know
How he could best his grateful spirit show.

Now the third dinner had their powers renew'd,
And fruit and wine upon the table stood;

The fire brought comfort, and the warmth it lent
A cheerful spirit to the feelings sent,
When thus the Uncle—" Morden, I depend
" On you for aid—assist me as a friend:
" Full well I know that you would much forego,
" And much endure, to wreak me on my foe.
" Charles, I am wrong'd, insulted—nay, be still,
" Nor look so fiercely,—there are none to kill.

" I loved a lady, somewhat late in life,
" Perhaps too late, and would have made a wife;
" Nay, she consented; for consent I call
" The mark'd distinction that was seen of all,
" And long was seen; but when she knew my pain,
" Saw my first wish her favour to obtain,
" And ask her hand—no sooner was it ask'd,
" Than she, the lovely Jezebel unmask'd;
" And by her haughty airs, and scornful pride,
" My peace was wounded—nay, my reason tried;
" I felt despised and fallen when we met,
" And she, O folly! looks too lovely yet;
" Yet love no longer in my bosom glows,
" But my heart warms at the revenge it owes.

" O! that I saw her with her soul on fire,
" Desperate from love, and sickening with desire;

" While all beheld her just, unpitied pain,
" Grown in neglect, and sharpen'd by disdain!
" Let her be jealous of each maid she sees,
" Striving by every fruitless art to please,
" And when she fondly looks, let looks and fondness
tease!
" So, lost on passion's never resting sea,
" Hopeless and helpless, let her think of me!
" Charles, thou art handsome, nor canst want the art
" To warm a cold or win a wanton heart:
" Be my avenger"——
Charles, with smile, not vain,
Nor quite unmix'd with pity and disdain,
Sate mute in wonder; but he sate not long
Without reflection:—Was Sir Owen wrong?
" So must I think; for can I judge it right
" To treat a lovely lady with despite?
" Because she play'd too roughly with the love
" Of a fond man whom she could not approve,
" And yet to vex him for the love he bore
" Is cause enough for his revenge, and more.

" But, thoughts, to council!—Do I wear a charm
" That will preserve my citadel from harm?
" Like the good knight, I have a heart that feels
" The wounds that beauty makes and kindness heals:

" Beauty she has, it seems, but is not kind—
" So found Sir Owen, and so I may find.

" Yet why, O! heart of tinder, why afraid?
" Comes so much danger from so fair a maid?
" Wilt thou be made a voluntary prize
" To the fierce firing of two wicked eyes?
" Think her a foe, and on the danger rush,
" Nor let thy kindred for a coward blush.

" But how if this fair creature should incline
" To think too highly of this love of mine,
" And, taking all my counterfeit address
" For sterling passion, should the like profess?

" Nay, this is folly; or if I perceive
" Ought of the kind, I can but take my leave;
" And if the heart should feel a little sore,
" Contempt and anger will its ease restore.

" Then, too, to his all-bounteous hand I owe
" All I possess, and almost all I know;
" And shall I for my friend no hazard run,
" Who seeks no more for all his love has done?

" 'Tis but to meet and bow, to talk and smile,
" To act a part, and put on love awhile:
" And the good knight shall see, this trial made,
" That I have just his talents to persuade;
" For why the lady should her heart bestow
" On me, or I of her enamour'd grow,
" There's none can reason give, there's none can danger
show."

These were his rapid thoughts, and then he spoke.
" I make a promise, and will not revoke;
" You are my judge in what is fit and right,
" And I obey you—bid me love or fight;
" Yet had I rather, so the act could meet
" With your concurrence,—not to play the cheat;
" In a fair cause"——" Charles, fighting for your king,
" Did you e'er judge the merits of the thing?
" Show me a monarch who has cause like mine,
" And yet what soldier would his cause decline?"

Poor Charles or saw not, or refused to see,
How weak the reasoning of our hopes may be,
And said—" Dear uncle, I my king obey'd,
" And for his glory's sake the soldier play'd;
" Now a like duty shall your nephew rule,
" And for your vengeance I will play the fool."

'Twas well; but ere they parted for repose,
A solemn oath must the engagement close.

"Swear to me, nephew, from the day you meet
"This cruel girl, there shall be no deceit;
"That by all means approved and used by man
"You win this dangerous woman, if you can;
"That being won, you my commands obey,
"Leave her lamenting, and pursue your way;
"And that, as in my business, you will take
"My will as guide, and no resistance make:
"Take now an oath—within the volume look,
"There is the Gospel—swear, and kiss the book."

"It cannot be," thought Charles, "he cannot rest
"In this strange humour,—it is all a jest,
"All but dissimulation——Well, sir, there;
"Now I have sworn as you would have me swear."

"'Tis well," the uncle said in solemn tone;
"Now send me vengeance, Fate, and groan for groan!"

The time is come: the soldier now must meet
Th' unconscious object of the sworn deceit.
They meet; each other's looks the pair explore,
And, such their fortune, wish'd to part no more.

Whether a man is thus disposed to break
An evil compact he was forced to make,
Or whether some contention in the breast
Will not permit a feeling heart to rest;
Or was it nature, who in every case
Has made such mind subjected to such face;
Whate'er the cause, no sooner met the pair
Than both began to love, and one to feel despair.

But the fair damsel saw with strong delight
Th' impression made, and gloried in the sight:
No chilling doubt alarm'd her tender breast,
But she rejoiced in all his looks profess'd;
Long ere his words her lover's hopes convey'd
They warm'd the bosom of the conscious maid;
One spirit seem'd each nature to inspire,
And the two hearts were fix'd in one desire.

"Now," thought the courteous maid, "my father's friend
"Will ready pardon to my fault extend;
"He shall no longer lead that hermit's life,
"But love his mistress in his nephew's wife;
"My humble duty shall his anger kill,
"And I who fled his love will meet his will,
"Prevent his least desire, and every wish fulfil."

Hail, happy power! that to the present lends
Such views; not all on Fortune's wheel depends,
Hope, fair enchantress, drives each cloud away,
And now enjoys the glad, but distant day.

Still fears ensued; for love produces fear.—
"To this dear maid can I indeed be dear?
"My fatal oath, alas! I now repent;
"Stern in his purpose, he will not relent;
"Would, ere that oath, I had Camilla seen!
"I had not then my honour's victim been:
"I must be honest, yet I know not how,
"'Tis crime to break, and death to keep my vow."

Sir Owen closely watch'd both maid and man,
And saw with joy proceed his cruel plan;
Then gave his praise—"She has it—has it deep
"In her capricious heart,—it murders sleep;
"You see the looks that grieve, you see the eyes that
weep;
"Now breathe again, dear youth, the kindling fire,
"And let her feel what she could once inspire."

Alas! obedience was an easy task,
So might he cherish what he meant to ask;

He ventured soon, for Love prepared his way,
He sought occasion, he forbad delay;
In spite of vow foregone he taught the youth
The looks of passion, and the words of truth;
In spite of woman's caution, doubt, and fear,
He bade her credit all she wish'd to hear;
An honest passion ruled in either breast,
And both believed the truth that both profess'd.

But now, 'mid all her new-born hopes, the eyes
Of fair Camilla saw through all disguise,
Reserve, and apprehension——Charles, who now
Grieved for his duty, and abhorr'd his vow,
Told the full fact, and it endear'd him more;
She felt her power, and pardon'd all he swore,
Since to his vow he could his wish prefer,
And loved the man who gave his world for her.

What must they do, and how their work begin,
Can they that temper to their wishes win?
They tried, they fail'd; and all they did t' assuage
The tempest of his soul provoked his rage;
The uncle met the youth with angry look,
And cried, "Remember, sir, the oath you took;
"You have my pity, Charles, but nothing more,
"Death, and death only, shall her peace restore;

" And am I dying?—I shall live to view
" The harlot's sorrow, and enjoy it too.

" How! Words offend you? I have borne for years.
" Unheeded anguish, shed derided tears,
" Felt scorn in every look, endured the stare
" Of wondering fools, who never felt a care;
" On me all eyes were fix'd, and I the while
" Sustain'd the insult of a rival's smile.

" And shall I now—entangled thus my foe,
" My honest vengeance for a boy forego?
" A boy forewarn'd, forearm'd? Shall this be borne,
" And I be cheated, Charles, and thou forsworn?
" Hope not, I say, for thou mayst change as well
" The sentence graven on the gates of hell—
" Here bid adieu to hope,—here hopeless beings dwell.

" But does she love thee, Charles? I cannot live
" Dishonour'd, unrevenged—I may forgive,
" But to thy oath I bind thee; on thy soul
" Seek not my injured spirit to control;
" Seek not to soften, I am hard of heart,
" Harden'd by insult:—leave her now, and part,
" And let me know she grieves while I enjoy her
smart."

Charles first in anger to the knight replied,
Then felt the clog upon his soul, and sigh'd:
To his obedience made his wishes stoop,
And now admitted, now excluded hope;
As lovers do, he saw a prospect fair,
And then so dark, he sank into despair.

The uncle grieved; he even told the youth
That he was sorry, and it seem'd a truth;
But though it vex'd, it varied not his mind,
He bound himself, and would his nephew bind.

"I told him this, placed danger in his view,
"Bade him be certain, bound him to be true;
"And shall I now my purposes reject,
"Because my warnings were of no effect?"

Thus felt Sir Owen as a man whose cause
Is very good—it had his own applause.

Our knight a tenant had in high esteem,
His constant boast, when justice was his theme:
He praised the farmer's sense, his shrewd discourse,
Free without rudeness, manly, and not coarse;

As farmer, tenant, nay, as man, the knight
Thought Ellis all that is approved and right;
Then he was happy, and some envy drew,
For knowing more than other farmers knew;
They call'd him learned, and it sooth'd their pride,
While he in his was pleased and gratified.

Still more t' offend, he to the altar led
The vicar's niece, to early reading bred;
Who, though she freely ventured on the life,
Could never fully be the farmer's wife;
She had a softness, gentleness, and ease,
Sure a coarse mind to humble and displease:
O! had she never known a fault beside,
How vain their spite, how impotent their pride!

Three darling girls the happy couple bless'd,
Who now the sweetest lot of life possess'd;
For what can more a grateful spirit move
Than health, with competence, and peace, with love?

Ellis would sometimes, thriving man! retire
To the town inn, and quit the parlour fire;
But he was ever kind where'er he went,
And trifling sums in his amusements spent:
He bought, he thought for her—she should have been
content:

Oft, when he cash received at Smithfield mart,
At Cranbourn-alley he would leave a part;
And, if to town he follow'd what he sold,
Sure was his wife a present to behold.

Still, when his evenings at the inn were spent,
She mused at home in sullen discontent;
And, sighing, yielded to a wish that some
With social spirit to the farm would come:
There was a farmer in the place, whose name,
And skill in rural arts, was known to fame;
He had a pupil, by his landlord sent,
On terms that gave the parties much content;
The youth those arts, and those alone, should learn,
With aught beside his guide had no concern:
He might to neighb'ring towns or distant ride,
And there amusements seek without a guide:
With handsome prints his private room was graced,
His music there, and there his books were placed:
Men knew not if he farm'd, but they allow'd him taste.

Books, prints, and music, ceasé, at times, to charm,
And sometimes men can neither ride nor farm;
They look for kindred minds, and Cecil found,
In Farmer Ellis, one inform'd and sound;

But in his wife—I hate the fact I tell—
A lovely being, who could please too well:
And he was one who never would deny
Himself a pleasure, or indeed would try.

Early and well the wife of Ellis knew
Where danger was, and trembled at the view;
So evil spirits tremble, but are still
Evil, and lose not the rebellious will:
She sought not safety from the fancied crime,
"And why retreat before the dangerous time?"

Oft came the student of the farm and read,
And found his mind with more than reading fed:
This Ellis seeing, left them, or he staid,
As pleased him, not offended nor afraid:
He came in spirits with his girls to play,
Then ask excuse, and, laughing, walk away:
When, as he enter'd, Cecil ceased to read,
He would exclaim, "Proceed, my friend, proceed!"
Or, sometimes weary, would to bed retire,
And fear and anger by his ease inspire.

"My conversation does he then despise?
"Leaves he this slighted face for other eyes?"

So said Alicia; and she dwelt so long
Upon that thought, to leave her was to wrong.

Alas! the woman loved the soothing tongue,
That yet pronounced her beautiful and young;
The tongue that, seeming careless, ever praised;
The eye that roving, on her person gazed;
The ready service, on the watch to please;
And all such sweet, small courtesies as these.

Still there was virtue, but a rolling stone
On a hill's brow is not more quickly gone;
The slightest motion,—ceasing from our care,—
A moment's absence,—when we're not aware,—
When down it rolls, and at the bottom lies,
Sunk, lost, degraded, never more to rise!
Far off the glorious height from whence it fell,
With all things base and infamous to dwell.

Friendship with woman is a dangerous thing—
Thence hopes avow'd and bold confessions spring:
Frailties confess'd to other frailties lead,
And new confessions new desires succeed;
And, when the friends have thus their hearts disclosed,
They find how little is to guilt opposed.

The foe's attack will on the fort begin,
When he is certain of a friend within.

When all was lost,—or, in the lover's sight,
When all was won,—the lady thought of flight.

"What! sink a slave?" she said, "and with deceit
"The rigid virtue of a husband meet?
"No! arm'd with death, I would his fury brave,
"And own the justice of the blow he gave!
"But thus to see him easy, careless, cold,
"And his confiding folly to behold;
"To feel incessant fears that he should read,
"In looks assumed, the cause whence they proceed,
"I cannot brook; nor will I here abide
"Till chance betrays the crime that shame would hide:
"Fly with me, Henry!" Henry sought in vain
To soothe her terrors and her griefs restrain:
He saw the lengths that women dared to go,
And fear'd the husband both as friend and foe.
Of farming weary—for the guilty mind
Can no resource in guiltless studies find,
Left to himself, his mother all unknown,
His titled father, loth the boy to own,
Had him to decent expectations bred,
A favour'd offspring of a lawless bed;

And would he censure one who should pursue
The way he took? Alicia yet was new:
Her passion pleased him: he agreed on flight:
They fix'd the method, and they chose the night.

Then, while the Farmer read of public crimes,
Collating coolly Chronicles and Times,
The flight was taken by the guilty pair,
That made one passage in the columns there.

The heart of Ellis bled; the comfort, pride,
The hope and stay of his existence died;
Rage from the ruin of his peace arose,
And he would follow and destroy his foes;
Would with wild haste the guilty pair pursue,
And when he found—Good heaven! what would he do?

That wretched woman he would wildly seize,
And agonize her heart, his own to ease;
That guilty man would grasp, and in her sight
Insult his pangs, and her despair excite;
Bring death in view, and then the stroke suspend,
And draw out tortures till his life should end:
O! it should stand recorded in all time,
How they transgress'd, and he avenged the crime!

In this bad world should all his business cease,
He would not seek—he would not taste of peace;
But wrath should live till vengeance had her due,
And with his wrath his life should perish too.

His girls—not his—he would not be so weak—
Child was a word he never more must speak!
How did he know what villains had defiled
His honest bed?—He spurn'd the name of child:
Keep them he must; but he would coarsely hide
Their forms, and nip the growth of woman's pride;
He would consume their flesh, abridge their food,
And kill the mother-vices in their blood.

All this Sir Owen heard, and grieved for all;
He with the husband mourn'd Alicia's fall;
But urged the vengeance with a spirit strong,
As one whose own rose high against the wrong:
He saw his tenant by this passion moved,
Shared in his wrath, and his revenge approved.

Years now unseen, he mourn'd this tenant's fate,
And wonder'd how he bore his widow'd state;

Still he would mention Ellis with the pride
Of one who felt himself to worth allied:
Such were his notions—had been long, but now
He wish'd to see if vengeance lived, and how:
He doubted not a mind so strong must feel
Most righteously, and righteous measures deal.

Then would he go, and haply he might find
Some new excitement for a weary mind;
Might learn the miseries of a pair undone,
One scorn'd and hated, lost and perish'd one:
Yes, he would praise to virtuous anger give,
And so his vengeance should be nursed and live.

Ellis was glad to see his landlord come,
A transient joy broke in upon his gloom,
And pleased he led the knight to the superior room;
Where she was wont in happier days to sit,
Who paid with smiles his condescending wit.

There the sad husband, who had seldom been
Where prints acquired in happier days were seen,
Now struck by these, and carried to the past,
A painful look on every object cast:

Sir Owen saw his tenant's troubled state,
But still he wish'd to know the offenders' fate.

"Know you they suffer, Ellis?"—Ellis knew;—
"'Tis well! 'tis just! but have they all their due?
"Have they in mind and body, head and heart,
"Sustain'd the pangs of their accursed part?"

"They have!"—"'Tis well!"—"and wants enough
to shake
"The firmest mind, the stoutest heart to break."

"But have you seen them in such misery dwell?"
"In misery past description."—"That is well."

"Alas! Sir Owen, it perhaps is just,—
"Yet I began my purpose to distrust;
"For they to justice have discharged a debt,
"That vengeance surely may her claim forget."

"Man, can you pity?"
"As a man I feel
"Miseries like theirs."
"But never would you heal?"

" Hear me, Sir Owen:—I had sought them long,
" Urged by the pain of ever present wrong,
" Yet had not seen; and twice the year came round—
" Years hateful now—ere I my victims found:
" But I did find them, in the dungeon's gloom
" Of a small garret—a precarious home,
" For that depended on the weekly pay,
" And they were sorely frighten'd on the day;
" But there they linger'd on from week to week,
" Haunted by ills of which 'tis hard to speak,
" For they are many and vexatious all,
" The very smallest—but they none were small.

" The roof, unceil'd in patches, gave the snow
" Entrance within, and there were heaps below;
" I pass'd a narrow region dark and cold,
" The strait of stairs to that infectious hold;
" And, when I enter'd, misery met my view
" In every shape she wears, in every hue,
" And the black icy blast across the dungeon flew;
" There frown'd the ruin'd walls that once were white;
" There gleam'd the panes that once admitted light;
" There lay unsavoury scraps of wretched food;
" And there a measure, void of fuel, stood;

" But who shall part by part describe the state
" Of these, thus follow'd by relentless fate?
" All, too, in winter, when the icy air
" Breathed its bleak venom on the guilty pair.

" That man, that Cecil!—he was left, it seems,
" Unnamed, unnoticed: farewell to his dreams!
" Heirs made by law rejected him of course,
" And left him neither refuge nor resource:—
" Their father's? No: he was the harlot's son
" Who wrong'd them, whom their duty bade them shun;
" And they were duteous all, and he was all undone.

" Now the lost pair, whom better times had led
" To part disputing, shared their sorrow's bed:
" Their bed!—I shudder as I speak—and shared
" Scraps to their hunger by the hungry spared."

" Man! my good Ellis! can you sigh?"—" I can:
" In short, Sir Owen, I must feel as man;
" And could you know the miseries they endured,
" The poor, uncertain pittance they procured;
" When, laid aside the needle and the pen,
" Their sickness won the neighbours of their den,

" Poor as they are, and they are passing poor,
" To lend some aid to those who needed more:
" Then, too, an ague with the winter came,
" And in this state—that wife I cannot name
" Brought forth a famish'd child of suffering and of shame.

" This had you known, and traced them to this scene,
" Where all was desolate, defiled, unclean,
" A fireless room, and, where a fire had place,
" The blast loud howling down the empty space,
" You must have felt a part of the distress,
" Forgot your wrongs, and made their suffering less!"

" Sought you them, Ellis, from the mean intent
" To give them succour?"
" What indeed I meant
" At first was vengeance; but I long pursued
" The pair, and I at last their misery view'd
" In that vile garret, which I cannot paint—
" The sight was loathsome, and the smell was faint;
" And there that wife,—whom I had loved so well,
" And thought so happy, was condemn'd to dwell;
" The gay, the grateful wife, whom I was glad
" To see in dress beyond our station clad,

" And to behold among our neighbours fine,
" More than perhaps became a wife of mine;
" And now among her neighbours to explore,
" And see her poorest of the very poor!—
" I would describe it, but I bore a part,
" Nor can explain the feelings of the heart;
" Yet memory since has aided me to trace
" The horrid features of that dismal place.
" There she reclined unmoved, her bosom bare
" To her companion's unimpassion'd stare,
" And my wild wonder:—Seat of virtue! chaste
" As lovely once! O! how wert thou disgraced!
" Upon that breast, by sordid rags defiled,
" Lay the wan features of a famish'd child;—
" That sin-born babe in utter misery laid,
" Too feebly wretched even to cry for aid;
" The ragged sheeting, o'er her person drawn,
" Served for the dress that hunger placed in pawn.

" At the bed's feet the man reclined his frame:
" Their chairs were perish'd to support the flame
" That warm'd his agued limbs; and, sad to see,
" That shook him fiercely as he gazed on me.

" I was confused in this unhappy view:
" My wife! my friend! I could not think it true;

" My children's mother,—my Alicia,—laid
" On such a bed! so wretched,—so afraid!
" And her gay, young seducer, in the guise
" Of all we dread, abjure, defy, despise,
" And all the fear and terror in his look,
" Still more my mind to its foundation shook.

" At last he spoke:—' Long since I would have died,
" ' But could not leave her, though for death I sigh'd,
" ' And tried the poison'd cup, and dropp'd it as I tried.

" ' She is a woman, and that famish'd thing
" ' Makes her to life, with all its evils, cling:
" ' Feed her, and let her breathe her last in peace,
" ' And all my sufferings with your promise cease!'

" Ghastly he smiled:—I knew not what I felt,
" But my heart melted—hearts of flint would melt,
" To see their anguish, penury, and shame,
" How base, how low, how groveling they became:
" I could not speak my purpose, but my eyes
" And my expression bade the creature rise.

" Yet, O! that woman's look! my words are vain
" Her mix'd and troubled feelings to explain;

" True, there was shame and consciousness of fall,
" But yet remembrance of my love withal,
" And knowledge of that power which she would now
recal.

" But still the more that she to memory brought,
" The greater anguish in my mind was wrought;
" The more she tried to bring the past in view,
" She greater horror on the present threw;
" So that, for love or pity, terror thrill'd
" My blood, and vile and odious thoughts instill'd.

" This war within, these passions in their strife,
" If thus protracted, had exhausted life;
" But the strong view of these departed years
" Caused a full burst of salutary tears,
" And as I wept at large, and thought alone,
" I felt my reason re-ascend her throne."

" My friend!" Sir Owen answer'd, " what became
" Of your just anger?—when you saw their shame,
" It was your triumph, and you should have shown
" Strength, if not joy—their sufferings were their
own."

" Alas, for them! their own in very deed!
" And they of mercy had the greater need;
" Their own by purchase, for their frailty paid,—
" And wanted heaven's own justice human aid?
" And seeing this, could I beseech my God
" For deeper misery, and a heavier rod?"

" But could you help them?"—"Think, Sir Owen, how
" I saw them then—methinks I see them now!
" She had not food, nor aught a mother needs,
" Who for another life and dearer feeds:
" I saw her speechless; on her wither'd breast
" The wither'd child extended, but not prest,
" Who sought, with moving lip and feeble cry,
" Vain instinct! for the fount without supply.

" Sure it was all a grievous, odious scene,
" Where all was dismal, melancholy, mean,
" Foul with compell'd neglect, unwholesome, and unclean;
" That arm,—that eye,—the cold, the sunken cheek,—
" Spoke all, Sir Owen—fiercely miseries speak!"

" And you relieved?"
" If hell's seducing crew
" Had seen that sight, they must have pitied too."

" Revenge was thine—thou hadst the power, the right;
" To give it up was heaven's own act to slight."

" Tell me not, Sir, of rights, and wrongs, or powers!
" I felt it written—Vengeance is not ours!"

" Well, Ellis, well!—I find these female foes,
" Or good or ill, will murder our repose;
" And we, when Satan tempts them, take the cup,
" The fruit of their foul sin, and drink it up:
" But shall our pity all our claims remit,
" And we the sinners of their guilt acquit?"

" And what, Sir Owen, will our vengeance do?
" It follows us when we our foe pursue,
" And, as we strike the blow, it smites the smiters too."

" What didst thou, man?"
" I brought them to a cot
" Behind your larches,—a sequester'd spot,
" Where dwells the woman: I believe her mind
" Is now enlighten'd—I am sure resign'd:
" She gave her infant, though with aching heart
" And faltering spirit, to be nursed apart."

" And that vile scoundrel"——

" Nay, his name restore,
" And call him Cecil,—for he is no more:
" When my vain help was offer'd, he was past
" All human aid, and shortly breathed his last;
" But his heart open'd, and he lived to see
" Guilt in himself, and find a friend in me.

" Strange was their parting, parting on the day
" I offer'd help, and took the man away,
" Sure not to meet again, and not to live
" And taste of joy—He feebly cried, ' Forgive!
" ' I have thy guilt, thou mine, but now adieu!
" ' Tempters and tempted! what will thence ensue
" ' I know not, dare not think!'—He said, and he
withdrew."

" But, Ellis, tell me, didst thou thus desire
" To heap upon their heads those coals of fire?"

" If fire to melt, that feeling is confest,—
" If fire to shame, I let that question rest;
" But if aught more the sacred words imply,
" I know it not—no commentator I."

" Then did you freely from your soul forgive?"—

" Sure as I hope before my Judge to live,
" Sure as I trust his mercy to receive,
" Sure as his word I honour and believe,
" Sure as the Saviour died upon the tree
" For all who sin,—for that dear wretch and me,—
" Whom never more on earth will I forsake or see."

Sir Owen softly to his bed adjourn'd,
Sir Owen quickly to his home return'd;
And all the way he meditating dwelt
On what this man in his affliction felt;
How he, resenting first, forbore, forgave,
His passion's lord, and not his anger's slave:
And as he rode he seem'd to fear the deed
Should not be done, and urged unwonted speed.

Arrived at home, he scorn'd the change to hide,
Nor would indulge a mean and selfish pride,
That would some little at a time recal
Th' avenging vow; he now was frankness all:

He saw his nephew, and with kindness spoke—
" Charles, I repent my purpose, and revoke,
" Take her—I'm taught, and would I could repay
" The generous teacher; hear me, and obey:
" Bring me the dear coquette, and let me vow
" On lips half perjured to be passive now:
" Take her, and let me thank the powers divine
" She was not stolen when her hand was mine,
" Or when her heart—Her smiles I must forget,
" She my revenge, and cancel either debt."

Here ends our tale, for who will doubt the bliss
Of ardent lovers in a case like this?
And if Sir Owen's was not half so strong,
It may, perchance, continue twice as long.

TALES OF THE HALL.

BOOK XIII.

Morning Excursion—Lady at Silford, who?—Reflections on Delay—Cecilia and Henry—The Lovers contracted—Visit to the Patron—Whom he finds there—Fanny described—The yielding of Vanity—Delay—Resentment—Want of Resolution—Further Entanglement—Danger—How met—Conclusion.

TALES OF THE HALL.

BOOK XIII.

DELAY HAS DANGER.

THREE weeks had pass'd, and Richard rambles now
Far as the dinners of the day allow;
He rode to Farley Grange and Finley Mere,
That house so ancient, and that lake so clear:
He rode to Ripley through that river gay,
Where in the shallow stream the loaches play,
And stony fragments stay the winding stream,
And gilded pebbles at the bottom gleam,
Giving their yellow surface to the sun,
And making proud the waters as they run:
It is a lovely place, and at the side
Rises a mountain-rock in rugged pride;
And in that rock are shapes of shells, and forms
Of creatures in old worlds, of nameless worms,

Whose generations lived and died ere man,
A worm of other class, to crawl began.

There is a town call'd Silford, where his steed
Our traveller rested—He the while would feed
His mind by walking to and fro, to meet,
He knew not what adventure, in the street:
A stranger there, but yet a window-view
Gave him a face that he conceived he knew;
He saw a tall, fair, lovely lady, dress'd
As one whom taste and wealth had jointly bless'd;
He gazed, but soon a footman at the door
Thundering, alarm'd her, who was seen no more.

" This was the lady whom her lover bound
" In solemn contract, and then proved unsound:
" Of this affair I have a clouded view,
" And should be glad to have it clear'd by you."

So Richard spake, and instant George replied,
" I had the story from the injured side,
" But when resentment and regret were gone,
" And pity (shaded by contempt) came on.

" Frail was the hero of my tale, but still
" Was rather drawn by accident than will;

" Some without meaning into guilt advance,
" From want of guard, from vanity, from chance;
" Man's weakness flies his more immediate pain,
" A little respite from his fears to gain;
" And takes the part that he would gladly fly,
" If he had strength and courage to deny.

" But now my tale, and let the moral say,
" When hope can sleep, there's Danger in Delay.
" Not that for rashness, Richard, I would plead,
" For unadvised alliance: No, indeed:
" Think ere the contract—but, contracted, stand
" No more debating, take the ready hand:
" When hearts are willing, and when fears subside,
" Trust not to time, but let the knot be tied;
" For when a lover has no more to do,
" He thinks in leisure, what shall I pursue?
" And then who knows what objects come in view?
" For when, assured, the man has nought to keep
" His wishes warm and active, then they sleep:
" Hopes die with fears; and then a man must lose
" All the gay visions, and delicious views,
" Once his mind's wealth! He travels at his ease,
" Nor horrors now nor fairy-beauty sees;
" When the kind goddess gives the wish'd assent,
" No mortal business should the deed prevent;

" But the bless'd youth should legal sanction seek
" Ere yet th' assenting blush has fled the cheek.

" And—hear me, Richard,—man has reptile-pride
" That often rises when his fears subside;
" When, like a trader feeling rich, he now
" Neglects his former smile, his humble bow,
" And, conscious of his hoarded wealth, assumes
" New airs, nor thinks how odious he becomes.

" There is a wandering, wavering train of thought
" That something seeks where nothing should be sought,
" And will a self-delighted spirit move
" To dare the danger of pernicious love.

" First be it granted all was duly said
" By the fond youth to the believing maid;
" Let us suppose with many a sigh there came
" The declaration of the deathless flame;—
" And so her answer—' She was happy then,
" ' Bless'd in herself, and did not think of men;
" ' And with such comforts in her present state,
" ' A wish to change it was to tempt her fate;

" 'That she would not; but yet she would confess
" 'With him she thought her hazard would be less;
" 'Nay, more, she would esteem, she would regard
express:
" 'But to be brief—if he could wait and see
" 'In a few years what his desires would be.'"—

Henry for years read months, then weeks, nor found
The lady thought his judgment was unsound;
" For months read weeks," she read it to his praise,
And had some thoughts of changing it to *days*.

And here a short excursion let me make,
A lover tried, I think, for lovers' sake;
And teach the meaning in a lady's mind
When you can none in her expressions find:
Words are design'd that meaning to convey,
But often *Yea* is hidden in a *Nay!*
And what the charmer wills, some gentle hints betray.
Then, too, when ladies mean to yield at length,
They match their reasons with the lover's strength,
And, kindly cautious, will no force employ
But such as he can baffle or destroy.

As when heroic lovers beauty woo'd,
And were by magic's mighty art withstood,

The kind historian, for the dame afraid,
Gave to the faithful knight the stronger aid.

A downright *No!* would make a man despair,
Or leave for kinder nymph the cruel fair;
But "*No!* because I'm very happy now,
"Because I dread th' irrevocable vow,
"Because I fear papa will not approve,
"Because I love not—No, I cannot love;
"Because you men of Cupid make a jest,
"Because——in short, a single life is best."
A *No!* when back'd by reasons of such force,
Invites approach, and will recede of course.

Ladies, like towns besieged, for honour's sake,
Will some defence or its appearance make;
On first approach there's much resistance made,
And conscious weakness hides in bold parade;
With lofty looks, and threat'nings stern and proud,
"Come, if you dare," is said in language loud,
But if th' attack be made with care and skill,
"Come," says the yielding party, "if you will;"
Then each the other's valiant acts approve,
And twine their laurels in a wreath of love.—

We now retrace our tale, and forward go,—
Thus Henry rightly read Cecilia's No!
His prudent father, who had duly weigh'd,
And well approved the fortune of the maid,
Not much resisted, just enough to show
He knew his power, and would his son should know.

" Harry, I will, while I your bargain make,
" That you a journey to our patron take:
" I know her guardian; care will not become
" A lad when courting; as you must be dumb,
" You may be absent; I for you will speak,
" And ask what you are not supposed to seek."

Then came the parting hour, and what arise
When lovers part! expressive looks and eyes,
Tender and tear-full,—many a fond adieu,
And many a call the sorrow to renew;
Sighs such as lovers only can explain,
And words that they might undertake in vain.

Cecilia liked it not; she had, in truth,
No mind to part with her enamour'd youth;
But thought it foolish thus themselves to cheat,
And part for nothing but again to meet.

Now Henry's father was a man whose heart
Took with his interest a decided part;
He knew his Lordship, and was known for acts
That I omit,—they were acknowledged facts;
An interest somewhere; I the place forget,
And the good deed—no matter—'twas a debt:
Thither must Henry, and in vain the maid
Express'd dissent—the father was obey'd.

But though the maid was by her fears assail'd,
Her reason rose against them, and prevail'd;
Fear saw him hunting, leaping, falling—led,
Maim'd and disfigured, groaning to his bed;
Saw him in perils, duels,—dying,—dead.
But Prudence answer'd, "Is not every maid
"With equal cause for him she loves afraid?"
And from her guarded mind Cecilia threw
The groundless terrors that will love pursue.

She had no doubts, and her reliance strong
Upon the honour that she would not wrong:
Firm in herself, she doubted not the truth
Of him, the chosen, the selected youth;
Trust of herself a trust in him supplied,
And she believed him faithful, though untried:
On her he might depend, in him she would confide.

If some fond girl express'd a tender pain
Lest some fair rival should allure her swain,
To such she answer'd, with a look severe,
" Can one you doubt be worthy of your fear?"

My lord was kind,—a month had pass'd away,
And Henry stay'd,—he sometimes named a day;
But still my lord was kind, and Henry still must stay:
His father's words to him were words of fate—
" Wait, 'tis your duty; 'tis my pleasure, wait!"

In all his walks, in hilly heath or wood,
Cecilia's form the pensive youth pursued;
In the gray morning, in the silent noon,
In the soft twilight, by the sober moon,
In those forsaken rooms, in that immense saloon;
And he, now fond of that seclusion grown,
There reads her letters, and there writes his own.

" Here none approach," said he, " to interfere,
" But I can think of my Cecilia here!"

But there did come—and how it came to pass
Who shall explain?—a mild and blue-eyed lass;—

It was the work of accident, no doubt—
The cause unknown—we say, "as things fall out;"—
The damsel enter'd there, in wand'ring round about:
At first she saw not Henry; and she ran,
As from a ghost, when she beheld a man.

She was esteem'd a beauty through the hall,
And so admitted, with consent of all;
And, like a treasure, was her beauty kept
From every guest who in the mansion slept;
Whether as friends who join'd the noble pair,
Or those invited by the steward there.

She was the daughter of a priest, whose life
Was brief and sad: he lost a darling wife,
And Fanny then her father, who could save
But a small portion; but his all he gave,
With the fair orphan, to a sister's care,
And her good spouse: they were the ruling pair—
Steward and steward's lady—o'er a tribe,
Each under each, whom I shall not describe.

This grave old couple, childless and alone,
Would, by their care, for Fanny's loss atone:
She had been taught in schools of honest fame;
And to the Hall, as to a home, she came,

My lord assenting: yet, as meet and right,
Fanny was held from every hero's sight,
Who might in youthful error cast his eyes
On one so gentle as a lawful prize,
On border land, whom, as their right or prey,
A youth from either side might bear away.
Some handsome lover of th' inferior class
Might as a wife approve the lovely lass;
Or some invader from the class above,
Who, more presuming, would his passion prove
By asking less—love only for his love.

This much experienced aunt her fear express'd,
And dread of old and young, of host and guest.

" Go not, my Fanny, in their way," she cried,
" It is not right that virtue should be tried;
" So, to be safe, be ever at my side."

She was not ever at that side; but still
Observed her precepts, and obey'd her will.

But in the morning's dawn and evening's gloom
She could not lock the damsel in her room;
And Fanny thought, " I will ascend these stairs
" To see the chapel,—there are none at prayers;

"None," she believed, "had yet to dress return'd,
"By whom a timid girl might be discern'd:"
In her slow motion, looking, as she glides,
On pictures, busts, and what she met besides,
And speaking softly to herself alone,
Or singing low in melancholy tone;
And thus she rambled through the still domain,
Room after room, again, and yet again.

But, to retrace our story, still we say,
To this saloon the maiden took her way;
Where she beheld our youth, and frighten'd ran,
And so their friendship in her fear began.

But dare she thither once again advance,
And still suppose the man will think it chance?
Nay, yet again, and what has chance to do
With this?—I know not: doubtless Fanny knew.

Now, of the meeting of a modest maid
And sober youth why need we be afraid?
And when a girl's amusements are so few
As Fanny's were, what would you have her do?
Reserved herself, a decent youth to find,
And just be civil, sociable, and kind,

And look together at the setting sun,
Then at each other—What the evil done?

Then Fanny took my little lord to play,
And bade him not intrude on Henry's way:
"O, he intrudes not!" said the youth, and grew
Fond of the child, and would amuse him too;
Would make such faces, and assume such looks—
He loved it better than his gayest books.

When man with man would an acquaintance seek,
He will his thoughts in chosen language speak;
And they converse on divers themes, to find
If they possess a corresponding mind;
But man with woman has foundation laid,
And built up friendship ere a word is said:
'Tis not with words that they their wishes tell,
But with a language answering quite as well;
And thus they find, when they begin t' explore
Their way by speech, they knew it all before.

And now it chanced again the pair, when dark,
Met in their way, when wandering in the park;
Not in the common path, for so they might,
Without a wonder, wander day or night;

But, when in pathless ways their chance will bring
A musing pair, we do admire the thing.

The youth in meeting read the damsel's face,
As if he meant her inmost thoughts to trace;
On which her colour changed, as if she meant
To give her aid, and help his kind intent.

Both smiled and parted, but they did not speak—
The smile implied, "Do tell me what you seek:"
They took their different ways with erring feet,
And met again, surprised that they could meet;
Then must they speak—and something of the air
Is always ready—"'Tis extremely fair!"

"It was so pleasant!" Henry said; "the beam
"Of that sweet light so brilliant on the stream;
"And chiefly yonder, where that old cascade
"Has for an age its simple music made;
"All so delightful, soothing, and serene!
"Do you not feel it? not enjoy the scene?
"Something it has that words will not express,
"But rather hide, and make th' enjoyment less:
"'Tis what our souls conceive, 'tis what our hearts
confess."

Poor Fanny's heart at these same words confess'd
How well he painted, and how rightly guess'd;
And, while they stood admiring their retreat,
Henry found something like a mossy seat;
But Fanny sat not; no, she rather pray'd
That she might leave him, she was so afraid.

" Not, sir, of you; your goodness I can trust,
" But folks are so censorious and unjust,
" They make no difference, they pay no regard
" To our true meaning, which is very hard
" And very cruel; great the pain it cost
" To lose such pleasure, but it must be lost:
" Did people know how free from thought of ill
" One's meaning is, their malice would be still."

At this she wept; at least a glittering gem
Shone in each eye, and there was fire in them,
For as they fell, the sparkles, at his feet,
He felt emotions very warm and sweet.

" A lovely creature! not more fair than good,
" By all admired, by some, it seems, pursued,
" Yet self-protected by her virtue's force
" And conscious truth—What evil in discourse

" With one so guarded, who is pleased to trust
" Herself with me, reliance strong and just?"

Our lover then believed he must not seem
Cold to the maid who gave him her esteem;
Not manly this; Cecilia had his heart,
But it was lawful with his time to part;
It would be wrong in her to take amiss
A virtuous friendship for a girl like this;
False or disloyal he would never prove,
But kindness here took nothing from his love:
Soldiers to serve a foreign prince are known,
When not on present duty to their own;
So, though our bosom's queen we still prefer,
We are not always on our knees to her.
" Cecilia present, witness yon fair moon,
" And yon bright orbs, that fate would change as soon
" As my devotion; but the absent sun
" Cheers us no longer when his course is run;
" And then those starry twinklers may obtain
" A little worship till he shines again."

The father still commanded " Wait awhile,"
And the son answer'd in submissive style,
Grieved, but obedient; and obedience teased
His lady's spirit more than grieving pleased:

That he should grieve in absence was most fit,
But not that he to absence should submit;
And in her letters might be traced reproof,
Distant indeed, but visible enough;
This should the wandering of his heart have stay'd;
Alas! the wanderer was the vainer made.

The parties daily met, as by consent,
And yet it always seem'd by accident;
Till in the nymph the shepherd had been blind
If he had fail'd to see a manner kind,
With that expressive look, that seem'd to say,
"You do not speak, and yet you see you may."

O! yes, he saw, and he resolved to fly,
And blamed his heart, unwilling to comply:
He sometimes wonder'd how it came to pass,
That he had all this freedom with the lass;
Reserved herself, with strict attention kept,
And care and vigilance that never slept:
"How is it thus that they a beauty trust
"With me, who feel the confidence is just?
"And they, too, feel it; yes, they may confide,"—
He said in folly, and he smiled in pride.

'Tis thus our secret passions work their way,
And the poor victims know not they obey.

Familiar now became the wandering pair,
And there was pride and joy in Fanny's air;
For though his silence did not please the maid,
She judged him only modest and afraid;
The gentle dames are ever pleased to find
Their lovers dreading they should prove unkind;
So, blind by hope, and pleased with prospects gay,
The generous beauty gave her heart away
Before he said, "I love!"—alas! he dared not say.

Cecilia yet was mistress of his mind,
But oft he wish'd her, like his Fanny, kind;
Her fondness soothed him, for the man was vain,
And he perceived that he could give her pain:
Cecilia liked not to profess her love,
But Fanny ever was the yielding dove;
Tender and trusting, waiting for the word,
And then prepared to hail her bosom's lord.

Cecilia once her honest love avow'd,
To make him happy, not to make him proud;

But she would not, for every asking sigh,
Confess the flame that waked his vanity;
But this poor maiden, every day and hour,
Would, by fresh kindness, feed the growing power;
And he indulged, vain being! in the joy,
That he alone could raise it, or destroy;
A present good, from which he dared not fly,
Cecilia absent, and his Fanny by.

O! vain desire of youth, that in the hour
Of strong temptation, when he feels the power,
And knows how daily his desires increase,
Yet will he wait, and sacrifice his peace,
Will trust to chance to free him from the snare,
Of which, long since, his conscience said, beware
Or look for strange deliverance from that ill,
That he might fly, could he command the will!
How can he freedom from the future seek,
Who feels already that he grows too weak?
And thus refuses to resist, till time
Removes the power, and makes the way for crime:
Yet thoughts he had, and he would think, "Forego
"My dear Cecilia? not for kingdoms! No!
"But may I, ought I not the friend to be
"Of one who feels this fond regard for me?

"I wrong no creature by a kindness lent
"To one so gentle, mild, and innocent;
"And for that fair one, whom I still adore,
"By feeling thus I think of her the more;"
And not unlikely, for our thoughts will tend
To those whom we are conscious we offend.

Had Reason whisper'd, "Has Cecilia leave
"Some gentle youth in friendship to receive,
"And be to him the friend that you appear
"To this soft girl?—would not some jealous fear
"Proclaim your thoughts, that he approach'd too near?"

But Henry, blinded still, presumed to write
Of one in whom Cecilia would delight;
A mild and modest girl, a gentle friend,
If, as he hoped, her kindness would descend—
But what he fear'd to lose or hoped to gain
By writing thus, he had been ask'd in vain.

It was his purpose, every morn he rose,
The dangerous friendship he had made to close;
It was his torment nightly, ere he slept,
To feel his prudent purpose was not kept.

True, he has wonder'd why the timid maid
Meets him so often, and is not afraid;
And why that female dragon, fierce and keen,
Has never in their private walks been seen;
And often he has thought, "What can their silence mean?

"They can have no design, or plot, or plan,—
"In fact, I know not how the thing began,—
"'Tis their dependence on my credit here,
"And fear not, nor, in fact, have cause to fear."

But did that pair, who seem'd to think that all
Unwatch'd will wander and unguarded fall,
Did they permit a youth and maid to meet
Both unreproved? were they so indiscreet?

This sometimes enter'd Henry's mind, and then,
"Who shall account for women or for men?"
He said, "or who their secret thoughts explore?
"Why do I vex me? I will think no more."

My Lord of late had said, in manner kind,
"My good friend Harry, do not think us blind!"
Letters had pass'd, though he had nothing seen,
His careful father and my Lord between;

But to what purpose was to him unknown—
It might be borough business, or their own.

Fanny, it seem'd, was now no more in dread,
If one approach'd, she neither fear'd nor fled:
He mused on this,—"But wherefore her alarm?
"She knows me better, and she dreads no harm."

Something his father wrote that gave him pain:
"I know not, son, if you should yet remain;—
"Be cautious, Harry, favours to procure
"We strain a point, but we must first be sure:
"Love is a folly,—that, indeed, is true,—
"But something still is to our honour due,
"So I must leave the thing to my good Lord and you."

But from Cecilia came remonstrance strong:
"You write too darkly, and you stay too long;
"We hear reports; and, Henry,—mark me well,—
"I heed not every tale that triflers tell;—
"Be you no trifler; dare not to believe
"That I am one whom words and vows deceive:
"You know your heart, your hazard you will learn,
"And this your trial——instantly return."

" Unjust, injurious, jealous, cruel maid!
" Am I a slave, of haughty words afraid?
" Can she who thus commands expect to be obey'd?
" O! how unlike this dear assenting soul,
" Whose heart a man might at his will control!"

Uneasy, anxious, fill'd with self-reproof,
He now resolved to quit his patron's roof;
And then again his vacillating mind
To stay resolved, and that her pride should find:
Debating thus, his pen the lover took,
And chose the words of anger and rebuke.

Again, yet once again, the conscious pair
Met, and " O, speak!" was Fanny's silent prayer;
And, " I must speak," said the embarrass'd youth,
" Must save my honour, must confess the truth:
" Then I must lose her; but, by slow degrees,
" She will regain her peace, and I my ease."

Ah! foolish man; to virtue true nor vice,
He buys distress, and self-esteem the price;
And what his gain?—a tender smile and sigh
From a fond girl to feed his vanity.

Thus, every day they lived, and every time
They met, increased his anguish and his crime.

Still in their meetings they were ofttimes nigh
The darling theme, and then pass'd trembling by;
On those occasions Henry often tried
For the sad truth—and then his heart denied
The utterance due: thus daily he became
The prey of weakness, vanity, and shame.

But soon a day, that was their doubts to close,
On the fond maid and thoughtless youth arose.

Within the park, beside the bounding brook,
The social pair their usual ramble took;
And there the steward found them: they could trace
News in his look, and gladness in his face.

He was a man of riches, bluff and big,
With clean brown broad-cloth, and with white cut wig:
He bore a cane of price, with riband tied,
And a fat spaniel waddled at his side:
To every being whom he met he gave
His looks expressive; civil, gay, or grave,

But condescending all; and each declared
How much he govern'd, and how well he fared.

This great man bow'd, not humbly, but his bow
Appear'd familiar converse to allow:
The trembling Fanny, as he came in view,
Within the chestnut grove in fear withdrew;
While Henry wonder'd, not without a fear,
Of that which brought th' important man so near:
Doubt was dispersed by—"My esteem'd young man!"
As he with condescending grace began——

"Though you with youthful frankness nobly trust
"Your Fanny's friends, and doubtless think them just;
"Though you have not, with craving soul, applied
"To us, and ask'd the fortune of your bride,
"Be it our care that you shall not lament
"That love has made you so improvident.

"An orphan maid——Your patience! you shall have
"Your time to speak, I now attention crave;—
"Fanny, dear girl! has in my spouse and me
"Friends of a kind we wish our friends to be,
"None of the poorest——nay, sir, no reply,
"You shall not need——and we are born to die:

" And one yet crawls on earth, of whom, I say,
" That what he has he cannot take away;
" Her mother's father, one who has a store
" Of this world's good, and always looks for more;
" But, next his money, loves the girl at heart,
" And she will have it when they come to part."

" Sir," said the youth, his terrors all awake,
" Hear me, I pray, I beg,—for mercy's sake!
" Sir, were the secrets of my soul confess'd,
" Would you admit the truths that I protest
" Are such——your pardon"——
" Pardon! good, my friend,
" I not alone will pardon, I commend:
" Think you that I have no remembrance left
" Of youthful love, and Cupid's cunning theft?
" How nymphs will listen when their swains persuade,
" How hearts are gain'd, and how exchange is made?—
" Come, sir, your hand"——
" In mercy, hear me now!"
" I cannot hear you, time will not allow:
" You know my station, what on me depends,
" For ever needed—but we part as friends;
" And here comes one who will the whole explain,
" My better self—and we shall meet again."

" Sir, I entreat"——
" Then be entreaty made
" To her, a woman, one you may persuade;
" A little teasing, but she will comply,
" And loves her niece too fondly to deny."

" O! he is mad, and miserable I!"
Exclaim'd the youth; " But let me now collect
" My scatter'd thoughts, I something must effect."

Hurrying she came—" Now, what has he confess'd,
" Ere I could come to set your heart at rest?
" What! he has grieved you! Yet he, too, approves
" The thing! but man will tease you, if he loves.

" But now for business: tell me, did you think
" That we should always at your meetings wink?
" Think you, you walk'd unseen? There are who bring
" To me all secrets—O, you wicked thing!
" Poor Fanny! now I think I see her blush,
" All red and rosy, when I beat the bush;
" And hide your secret, said I, if you dare!
" So out it came, like an affrighten'd hare.

" Miss! said I, gravely; and the trembling maid
" Pleased me at heart to see her so afraid;
" And then she wept;—now, do remember this,
" Never to chide her when she does amiss;
" For she is tender as the callow bird,
" And cannot bear to have her temper stirr'd;—
" Fanny, I said, then whisper'd her the name,
" And caused such looks—Yes, yours are just the same;
" But hear my story—When your love was known
" For this our child—she is, in fact, our own—
" Then, first debating, we agreed at last
" To seek my Lord, and tell him what had past."

" To tell the Earl?"
" Yes, truly, and why not?
" And then together we contrived our plot."

" Eternal God!"
" Nay, be not so surprised,—
" In all the matter we were well advised;
" We saw my Lord, and Lady Jane was there,
" And said to Johnson, 'Johnson, take a chair:'
" True, we are servants in a certain way,
" But in the higher places so are they;
" We are obey'd in ours, and they in theirs obey—

" So Johnson bow'd, for that was right and fit,
" And had no scruple with the Earl to sit—
" Why look you so impatient while I tell
" What they debated?—you must like it well.

" ' Let them go on,' our gracious Earl began;
" ' They will go off,' said, joking, my good man:
" ' Well!' said the Countess,—she's a lover's friend,—
" ' What if they do, they make the speedier end'——
" But be you more composed, for that dear child
" Is with her joy and apprehension wild:
" O! we have watch'd you on from day to day,
" ' There go the lovers!' we were wont to say—
" But why that look?"—
" Dear Madam, I implore
" A single moment!"
" I can give no more:
" Here are your letters—that's a female pen,
" Said I to Fanny—' 'tis his sister's, then,'
" Replied the maid.—No! never must you stray;
" Or hide your wanderings, if you should, I pray;
" I know, at least I fear, the best may err,
" But keep the by-walks of your life from her:
" That youth should stray is nothing to be told,
" When they have sanction in the grave and old,

" Who have no call to wander and transgress,
" But very love of change and wantonness.

" I prattle idly, while your letters wait,
" And then my Lord has much that he would state,
" All good to you—do clear that clouded face,
" And with good looks your lucky lot embrace.

" Now, mind that none with her divide your heart,
" For she would die ere lose the smallest part;
" And I rejoice that all has gone so well,
" For who th' effect of Johnson's rage can tell?
" He had his fears when you began to meet,
" But I assured him there was no deceit:
" He is a man who kindness will requite,
" But injured once, revenge is his delight;
" And he would spend the best of his estates
" To ruin, goods and body, them he hates;
" While he is kind enough when he approves
" A deed that's done, and serves the man he loves:
" Come, read your letters—I must now be gone,
" And think of matters that are coming on."

Henry was lost,—his brain confused, his soul
Dismay'd and sunk, his thoughts beyond control;

Borne on by terror, he foreboding read
Cecilia's letter! and his courage fled;
All was a gloomy, dark, and dreadful view,
He felt him guilty, but indignant too:—
And as he read, he felt the high disdain
Of injured men—"She may repent, in vain."

Cecilia much had heard, and told him all
That scandal taught—"A servant at the Hall,
"Or servant's daughter, in the kitchen bred,
"Whose father would not with her mother wed,
"Was now his choice! a blushing fool, the toy,
"Or the attempted, both of man and boy;
"More than suspected, but without the wit
"Or the allurements for such creatures fit;
"Not virtuous though unfeeling, cold as ice
"And yet not chaste, the weeping fool of vice;
"Yielding, not tender; feeble, not refined;
"Her form insipid, and without a mind.

"Rival! she spurn'd the word; but let him stay,
"Warn'd as he was! beyond the present day,
"Whate'er his patron might object to this,
"The uncle-butler, or the weeping miss—

"Let him from this one single day remain,
"And then return! he would to her, in vain;
"There let him then abide, to earn, or crave
"Food undeserved! and be with slaves a slave."

Had reason guided anger, govern'd zeal,
Or chosen words to make a lover feel,
She might have saved him—anger and abuse
Will but defiance and revenge produce.

"Unjust and cruel, insolent and proud!"
He said, indignant, and he spoke aloud.
"Butler! and servant! Gentlest of thy sex,
"Thou wouldst not thus a man who loved thee vex;
"Thou wouldst not thus to vile report give ear,
"Nor thus enraged for fancied crimes appear;
"I know not what, dear maid!—if thy soft smiles
were here."

And then, that instant, there appear'd the maid,
By his sad looks in her approach dismay'd;
Such timid sweetness, and so wrong'd, did more
Than all her pleading tenderness before.

In that weak moment, when disdain and pride,
And fear and fondness, drew the man aside,

In this weak moment—" Wilt thou," he began,
" Be mine?" and joy o'er all her features ran;
" I will!" she softly whisper'd; but the roar
Of cannon would not strike his spirit more;
Ev'n as his lips the lawless contract seal'd
He felt that conscience lost her seven-fold shield,
And honour fled; but still he spoke of love,
And all was joy in the consenting dove.

That evening all in fond discourse was spent,
When the sad lover to his chamber went,
To think on what had past, to grieve and to repent:
Early he rose, and look'd with many a sigh
On the red light that fill'd the eastern sky;
Oft had he stood before, alert and gay,
To hail the glories of the new-born day:
But now dejected, languid, listless, low,
He saw the wind upon the water blow,
And the cold stream curl'd onward as the gale
From the pine-hill blew harshly down the dale;
On the right side the youth a wood survey'd,
With all its dark intensity of shade;
Where the rough wind alone was heard to move,
In this, the pause of nature and of love,

When now the young are rear'd, and when the old,
Lost to the tie, grow negligent and cold—
Far to the left he saw the huts of men,
Half hid in mist, that hung upon the fen;
Before him swallows, gathering for the sea,
Took their short flights, and twitter'd on the lea;
And near the bean-sheaf stood, the harvest done,
And slowly blacken'd in the sickly sun;
All these were sad in nature, or they took
Sadness from him, the likeness of his look,
And of his mind—he ponder'd for a while,
Then met his Fanny with a borrow'd smile.

Not much remain'd; for money and my Lord
Soon made the father of the youth accord;
His prudence half resisted, half obey'd,
And scorn kept still the guardians of the maid:
Cecilia never on the subject spoke,
She seem'd as one who from a dream awoke;
So all was peace, and soon the married pair
Fix'd with fair fortune in a mansion fair.

Five years had pass'd, and what was Henry then?
The most repining of repenting men;

With a fond, teasing, anxious wife, afraid
Of all attention to another paid;
Yet powerless she her husband to amuse,
Lives but t' entreat, implore, resent, accuse;
Jealous and tender, conscious of defects,
She merits little, and yet much expects;
She looks for love that now she cannot see,
And sighs for joy that never more can be;
On his retirements her complaints intrude,
And fond reproof endears his solitude:
While he her weakness (once her kindness) sees,
And his affections in her languor freeze;
Regret, uncheck'd by hope, devours his mind,
He feels unhappy, and he grows unkind.

" Fool! to be taken by a rosy cheek,
" And eyes that cease to sparkle or to speak;
" Fool! for this child my freedom to resign,
" When one the glory of her sex was mine;
" While from this burthen to my soul I hide,
" To think what Fate has dealt, and what denied.

" What fiend possess'd me when I tamely gave
" My forced assent to be an idiot's slave?
" Her beauty vanish'd, what for me remains?
" Th' eternal clicking of the galling chains:

" Her person truly I may think my own,
" Seen without pleasure, without triumph shown:
" Doleful she sits, her children at her knees,
" And gives up all her feeble powers to please;
" Whom I, unmoved, or moved with scorn, behold,
" Melting as ice, as vapid and as cold."

Such was his fate, and he must yet endure
The self-contempt that no self-love can cure:
Some business call'd him to a wealthy town
When unprepared for more than Fortune's frown;
There at a house he gave his luckless name,
The master absent, and Cecilia came;
Unhappy man! he could not, dared not speak,
But look'd around, as if retreat to seek:
This she allow'd not; but, with brow severe,
Ask'd him his business, sternly bent to hear;
He had no courage, but he view'd that face
As if he sought for sympathy and grace;
As if some kind returning thought to trace:
In vain; not long he waited, but with air,
That of all grace compell'd him to despair,
She rang the bell, and, when a servant came,
Left the repentant traitor to his shame;
But, going, spoke, " Attend this person out,
" And if he speaks, hear what he comes about!"

Then, with cool curtesy, from the room withdrew,
That seem'd to say, "Unhappy man, adieu!"

Thus will it be when man permits a vice
First to invade his heart, and then entice;
When wishes vain and undefined arise,
And that weak heart deceive, seduce, surprise;
When evil Fortune works on Folly's side,
And rash Resentment adds a spur to Pride;
Then life's long troubles from those actions come,
In which a moment may decide our doom.

TALES OF THE HALL.

BOOK XIV.

The Rector of the Parish—His Manner of teaching—Of living—Richard's Correspondence—The Letters received—Love that survives Marriage—That dies in consequence—That is permitted to die for Want of Care—Henry and Emma, a Dialogue—Complaints on either Side—And Replies—Mutual Accusation—Defence of acknowledged Error—Means of restoring Happiness—The one to be adopted.

TALES OF THE HALL.

BOOK XIV.

THE NATURAL DEATH OF LOVE.

RICHARD one month had with his Brother been,
And had his guests, his friends, his favourites seen;
Had heard the Rector, who with decent force,
But not of action, aided his discourse:
"A moral teacher!" some, contemptuous, cried;
He smiled, but nothing of the fact denied,
Nor, save by his fair life, to charge so strong replied.
Still, though he bade them not on aught rely
That was their own, but all their worth deny,
They call'd his pure advice his cold morality;
And though he felt that earnestness and zeal,
That made some portion of his hearers feel,
Nay, though he loved the minds of men to lead
To the great points that form the Christian's creed,

Still he offended, for he would discuss
Points that to him seem'd requisite for us;
And urge his flock to virtue, though he knew
The very heathen taught the virtues too:
Nor was this moral minister afraid
To ask of inspiration's self the aid
Of truths by him so sturdily maintain'd,
That some confusion in the parish reign'd;
"Heathens," they said, "can tell us right from wrong,
"But to a Christian higher points belong."
Yet Jacques proceeded, void of fear and shame,
In his old method, and obtain'd the name
Of *Moral Preacher*—yet they all agreed,
Whatever error had defiled his creed,
His life was pure, and him they could commend,
Not as their guide, indeed, but as their friend:
Truth, justice, pity, and a love of peace,
Were his—but there must approbation cease;
He either did not, or he would not see,
That if he meant a favourite priest to be
He must not show, but learn of them, the way
To truth—he must not dictate, but obey:
They wish'd him not to bring them further light,
But to convince them that they now were right,
And to assert that justice will condemn
All who presumed to disagree with them:

In this he fail'd; and his the greater blame,
For he persisted, void of fear or shame.

Him Richard heard, and by his friendly aid
Were pleasant views observed and visits paid;
He to peculiar people found his way,
And had his question answer'd, "Who are they?"

Twice in the week came letters, and delight
Beam'd in the eye of Richard at the sight;
Letters of love, all full and running o'er,
The paper fill'd till it could hold no more;
Cross'd with discolour'd ink, the doublings full,
No fear that love should find abundance dull;
Love reads unsated all that love inspires,
When most indulged, indulgence still requires;
Looks what the corners, what the crossings tell,
And lifts each folding for a fond farewell.

George saw and smiled—"To lovers we allow
"All this o'erflowing, but a husband thou!
"A father too; can time create no change?
"Married, and still so foolish?—very strange!
"What of this wife or mistress is the art?"—
"The simple truth, my Brother, to impart,
"Her heart, whene'er she writes, feels writing to a heart."

" Fortune, dear Richard, is thy friend—a wife
" Like thine must soften every care of life,
" And all its woes—I know a pair, whose lives
" Run in the common track of men and wives;
" And half their worth, at least, this pair would give
" Could they like thee and thy Matilda live.

" They were, as lovers, of the fondest kind,
" With no defects in manner or in mind;
" In habit, temper, prudence, they were those
" Whom, as examples, I could once propose;
" Now this, when married, you no longer trace,
" But discontent and sorrow in the place:
" Their pictures, taken as the pair I saw
" In a late contest, I have tried to draw;
" 'Tis but a sketch, and at my idle time
" I put my couple in the garb of rhyme:
" Thou art a critic of the milder sort,
" And thou wilt judge with favour my report.

" Let me premise, twelve months have flown away,
" Swiftly or sadly, since the happy day.

" Let us suppose the couple left to spend
" Some hours without engagement or a friend;

" And be it likewise on our mind impress d,
" They pass for persons happy and at rest;
" Their love by Hymen crown'd, and all their prospects
bless'd.

" Love has slow death and sudden: wretches prove
" That fate severe—the sudden death of love;
" It is as if, on day serenely bright,
" Came with its horrors instantaneous night;
" Others there are with whom love dies away
" In gradual waste and unperceived decay;
" Such is that death of love that nature finds
" Most fitted for the use of common minds,
" The natural death; but doubtless there are some
" Who struggle hard when they perceive it come;
" Loth to be loved no longer, loth to prove
" To the once dear that they no longer love;
" And some with not successless arts will strive
" To keep the weak'ning, fluttering flame alive.
" But see my verse; in this I try to paint
" The passion failing, fading to complaint,
" The gathering grief for joys remember'd yet,
" The vain remonstrance, and the weak regret:

" First speaks the wife in sorrow, she is grieved
" T' admit the truth, and would be still deceived."

HENRY AND EMMA.

E. Well, my good sir, I shall contend no more;
But, O! the vows you made, the oaths you swore——

H. To love you always:—I confess it true;
And do I not? If not, what can I do?
Moreover think what you yourself profess'd,
And then the subject may for ever rest.

E. Yes, sir, obedience I profess'd; I know
My debt, and wish to pay you all I owe,
Pay without murmur; but that vow was made
To you, who said it never should be paid;—
Now truly tell me why you took such care
To make me err? I ask'd you not to swear,
But rather hoped you would my mind direct,
And say, when married, what you would expect.

You may remember—it is not so long
Since you affirm'd that I could not be wrong;

I told you then—you recollect, I told
The very truth—that humour would not hold;
Not that I thought, or ever could suppose,
The mighty raptures were so soon to close—
Poetic flights of love all sunk in sullen prose.

Do you remember how you used to hang
Upon my looks? your transports when I sang?
I play'd—you melted into tears; I moved—
Voice, words, and motion, how you all approved;
A time when Emma reign'd, a time when Henry loved:
You recollect?

H. Yes, surely; and then why
The needless truths? do I the facts deny?
For this remonstrance I can see no need,
Or this impatience—if you do, proceed.

E. O! that is now so cool, and with a smile
That sharpens insult—I detest the style;
And, now I talk of styles, with what delight
You read my lines—I then, it seems, could write:
In short, when I was present, you could see
But one dear object, and you lived for me;
And now, sir, what your pleasure? Let me dress,
Sing, speak, or write, and you your sense express

Of my poor taste—my words are not correct;
In all I do is failing or defect—
Some error you will seek, some blunder will detect;
And what can such dissatisfaction prove?
I tell you, Henry, you have ceased to love.

H. I own it not; but if a truth it be,
It is the fault of nature, not of me.
Remember you, my love, the fairy tale,
Where the young pairs were spell-bound in the vale?
When all around them gay or glorious seem'd,
And of bright views and ceaseless joys they dream'd;
Young love and infant life no more could give—
They said but half, when they exclaim'd, "We live!"
All was so light, so lovely, so serene,
And not a trouble to be heard or seen;
Till, melting into truth, the vision fled,
And there came miry roads and thorny ways instead.

Such was our fate, my charmer! we were found
A wandering pair, by roguish Cupid bound;
All that I saw was gifted to inspire
Grand views of bliss, and wake intense desire
Of joys that never pall, of flights that never tire;
There was that purple light of love, that bloom,
That ardent passions in their growth assume,

That pure enjoyment of the soul—O! weak
Are words such loves and glowing thoughts to speak!
I sought to praise thee, and I felt disdain
Of my own effort; all attempts were vain.

Nor they alone were charming; by that light
All loved of thee grew lovely in my sight;
Sweet influence not its own in every place
Was found, and there was found in all things grace;
Thy shrubs and plants were seen new bloom to bear,
Not the Arabian sweets so fragrant were,
Nor Eden's self, if aught with Eden might compare.

You went the church-way walk, you reach'd the farm,
And gave the grass and babbling springs a charm;
Crop, whom you rode,—sad rider though you be,—
Thenceforth was more than Pegasus to me:
Have I not woo'd your snarling cur to bend
To me the paw and greeting of a friend?
And all his surly ugliness forgave,
Because, like me, he was my Emma's slave?
Think you, thus charm'd, I would the spell revoke?
Alas! my love, we married, and it broke!

Yet no deceit or falsehood stain'd my breast,
What I asserted might a saint attest;
Fair, dear, and good thou wert, nay, fairest, dearest, best:

Nor shame, nor guilt, nor falsehood I avow,
But 'tis by heaven's own light I see thee now;
And if that light will all those glories chase,
'Tis not my wish that will the good replace.

E. O! sir, this boyish tale is mighty well,
But 'twas your falsehood that destroy'd the spell:
Speak not of nature, 'tis an evil mind
That makes you to accustom'd beauties blind;
You seek the faults yourself, and then complain you find.

H. I sought them not; but, madam, 'tis in vain
The course of love and nature to restrain;
Lo! when the buds expand the leaves are green,
Then the first opening of the flower is seen;
Then comes the honied breath and rosy smile,
That with their sweets the willing sense beguile;
But, as we look, and love, and taste, and praise,
And the fruit grows, the charming flower decays;
Till all is gather'd, and the wintry blast
Moans o'er the place of love and pleasure past.

So 'tis with beauty,—such the opening grace
And dawn of glory in the youthful face;
Then are the charms unfolded to the sight,
Then all is loveliness and all delight;

The nuptial tie succeeds, the genial hour,
And, lo! the falling off of beauty's flower;
So, through all nature is the progress made,—
The bud, the bloom, the fruit,—and then we fade.

Then sigh no more,—we might as well retain
The year's gay prime as bid that love remain,
That fond, delusive, happy, transient spell,
That hides us from a world wherein we dwell,
And forms and fits us for that fairy ground,
Where charming dreams and gay conceits abound;
Till comes at length th'awakening strife and care,
That we, as tried and toiling men, must share.

E. O! sir, I must not think that heaven approves
Ungrateful man or unrequited loves;
Nor that we less are fitted for our parts
By having tender souls and feeling hearts.

H. Come, my dear friend, and let us not refuse
The good we have, by grief for that we lose;
But let us both the very truth confess;
This must relieve the ill, and may redress.

E. O! much I fear! I practised no deceit,
Such as I am I saw you at my feet;

If for a goddess you a girl would take,
'Tis you yourself the disappointment make.

H. And I alone?—O! Emma, when I pray'd
For grace from thee, transported and afraid,
Now raised to rapture, now to terror doom'd,
Was not the goddess by the girl assumed?
Did not my Emma use her skill to hide—
Let us be frank—her weakness and her pride?
Did she not all her sex's arts pursue,
To bring the angel forward to my view?
Was not the rising anger oft suppress'd?
Was not the waking passion hush'd to rest?
And when so mildly sweet you look'd and spoke,
Did not the woman deign to wear a cloak?
A cloak she wore, or, though not clear my sight,
I might have seen her—Think you not I might?

E. O! this is glorious!—while your passion lives,
To the loved maid a robe of grace it gives;
And then, unjust! beholds her with surprise,
Unrobed, ungracious, when the passion dies.

H. For this, my Emma, I to Heaven appeal,
I felt entirely what I seem'd to feel;

Thou wert all precious in my sight, to me
The being angels are supposed to be;
And am I now of my deception told,
Because I'm doom'd a woman to behold?

E. Sir! in few words I would a question ask—
Mean these reproaches that I wore a mask?
Mean you that I by art or caution tried
To show a virtue, or a fault to hide?

H. I will obey you—When you seem'd to feel
Those books we read, and praised them with such zeal,
Approving all that certain friends approved,
Was it the pages, or the praise you loved?
Nay, do not frown—I much rejoiced to find
Such early judgment in such gentle mind;
But, since we married, have you deign'd to look
On the grave subjects of one favourite book?
Or have the once-applauded pages power
T' engage their warm approver for an hour?

Nay, hear me further—When we view'd that dell,
Where lie those ruins—you must know it well—
When that worn pediment your walk delay'd,
And the stream gushing through the arch decay'd;
When at the venerable pile you stood,
Till the does ventured on our solitude,

We were so still! before the growing day
Call'd us reluctant from our seat away—
Tell me, was all the feeling you express'd
The genuine feeling of my Emma's breast?
Or was it borrow'd, that her faithful slave
The higher notion of her taste might have?
So may I judge, for of that lovely scene
The married Emma has no witness been;
No more beheld that water, falling, flow
Through the green fern that there delights to grow.

Once more permit me——Well, I know, you feel
For suffering men, and would their sufferings heal,
But when at certain huts you chose to call,
At certain seasons, was compassion all?
I there beheld thee, to the wretched dear
As angels to expiring saints appear
When whispering hope—I saw an infant press'd
And hush'd to slumber on my Emma's breast!
Hush'd be each rud sueggestion!—Well I know
With a free hand your bounty you bestow;
And to these objects frequent comforts send,
But still they see not now their pitying friend.
A merchant, Emma, when his wealth he states,
Though rich, is faulty if he over-rates

His real store; and, gaining greater trust
For the deception, should we deem him just?

If in your singleness of heart you hide
No flaw or frailty, when your truth is tried,
And time has drawn aside the veil of love,
We may be sorry, but we must approve;
The fancied charms no more our praise compel,
But doubly shines the worth that stands so well.

E. O! precious are you all, and prizes too,
Or could we take such guilty pains for you?
Believe it not—As long as passion lasts,
A charm about the chosen maid it casts;
And the poor girl has little more to do
Than just to keep in sight as you pursue:
Chance to a ruin leads her; you behold,
And straight the angel of her taste is told;
Chance to a cottage leads you, and you trace
A virtuous pity in the angel's face;
She reads a work you chance to recommend,
And likes it well—at least, she likes the friend;
But when it chances this no more is done,
She has not left one virtue—No! not one!

But be it said, good sir, we use such art,
Is it not done to hold a fickle heart,

And fix a roving eye?—Is that design
Shameful or wicked that would keep you mine?
If I confess the art, I would proceed
To say of such that every maid has need.

Then when you flatter—in your language—praise,
In our own view you must our value raise;
And must we not, to this mistaken man,
Appear as like his picture as we can?
If you will call—nay, treat us as divine,
Must we not something to your thoughts incline?
If men of sense will worship whom they love,
Think you the idol will the error prove?
What! show him all her glory is pretence,
And make an idiot of this man of sense?

Then, too, suppose we should his praise refuse,
And clear his mind, we may our lover lose;
In fact, you make us more than nature makes,
And we, no doubt, consent to your mistakes;
You will, we know, until the frenzy cools,
Enjoy the transient paradise of fools;
But fancy fled, you quit the blissful state,
And truth for ever bars the golden gate.

H. True! but how ill each other to upbraid,
'Tis not our fault that we no longer staid;

No sudden fate our lingering love supprest,
It died an easy death, and calmly sank to rest:
To either sex is the delusion lent,
And when it fails us, we should rest content,
'Tis cruel to reproach, when bootless to repent.

E. Then wise the lovers who consent to wait,
And always lingering, never try the state;
But hurried on, by what they call their pain
And I their bliss, no longer they refrain;
To ease that pain, to lose that bliss, they run
To the church magi, and the thing is done;
A spell is utter'd, and a ring applied,
And forth they walk a bridegroom and a bride,
To find this counter-charm, this marriage rite,
Has put their pleasant fallacies to flight!
But tell me, Henry, should we truly strive,
May we not bid the happy dream revive?

H. Alas! they say when weakness or when vice
Expels a foolish pair from Paradise,
The guardian power to prayer has no regard,
The knowledge once obtain'd, the gate is barr'd;
Or could we enter we should still repine,
Unless we could the knowledge too resign.

Yet let us calmly view our present fate,
And make a humbler Eden of our state;
With this advantage, that what now we gain,
Experience gives, and prudence will retain.

E. Ah! much I doubt—when you in fury broke
That lovely vase by one impassion'd stroke,
And thousand china-fragments met my sight,
Till rising anger put my grief to flight;
As well might you the beauteous jar repiece,
As joy renew and bid vexation cease.

H. Why then 'tis wisdom, Emma, not to keep
These griefs in memory; they had better sleep.

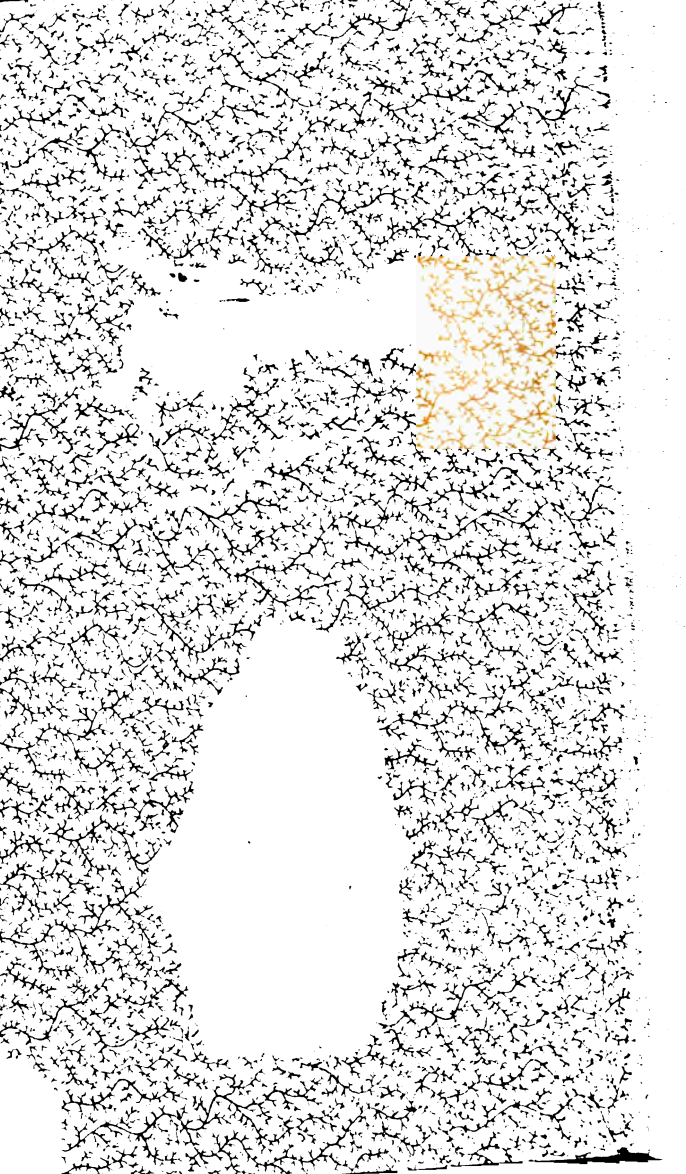
There was a time when this heaven-guarded isle,
Whose valleys flourish—nay, whose mountains smile,
Was steril, wild, deform'd, and beings rude
Creatures scarce wilder than themselves pursued;
The sea was heard around a waste to howl,
The night-wolf answer'd to the whooting owl,
And all was wretched—Yet who now surveys
The land, withholds his wonder and his praise?
Come, let us try and make our moral view
Improve like this—this have we power to do,

E. O! I'll be all forgetful, deaf and dumb,
And all you wish, to have these changes come.

H. And come they may, if not as heretofore,
We cannot all the lovely vase restore;
What we beheld in Love's perspective glass
Has pass'd away—one sigh! and let it pass—
It was a blissful vision, and it fled,
And we must get some actual good instead:
Of good and evil that we daily find,
That we must hoard, *this* banish from the mind;
The food of Love, that food on which he thrives,
To find must be the business of our lives;
And when we know what Love delights to see,
We must his guardians and providers be.

As careful peasants, with incessant toil,
Bring earth to vines in bare and rocky soil,
And, as they raise with care each scanty heap,
Think of the purple clusters they shall reap;
So those accretions to the mind we'll bring,
Whence fond regard and just esteem will spring;
Then, though we backward look with some regret
On those first joys, we shall be happy yet.

Each on the other must in all depend,
The kind adviser, the unfailing friend;
Through the rough world we must each other aid,
Leading and led, obeying and obey'd;
Favour'd and favouring, eager to believe
What should be truth—unwilling to perceive
What might offend—determined to remove
What has offended; wisely to improve
What pleases yet, and guard returning love.

Nor doubt, my Emma, but in many an hour
Fancy, who sleeps, shall wake with all her power;
And we shall pass—though not perhaps remain—
To fairy-land, and feel its charm again.

7